

# Labor Age

**FEB.-MARCH, 1933 . . . . . 15 CENTS**

## **Marxism Today**

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AN EDITORIAL



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# Our America

a monthly of social critique

in the

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The Return of Karl Marx

Sinclair Lewis's America vs. America

1933 Radicalism at the Cross Roads

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## Which Way Civilization?

This is the supreme question before the world.  
There are two answers.

One is fascism, an escape from making the next step forward, a return to nationalism and barter-economy. And today—it can no longer be doubted—out of the chaotic welter of capitalism in the United States the beckoning hand of fascism is being lifted in reality.

The shaken masses are turning in all directions for leadership promising a way out. Middle-class elements and drifting proletarian elements are dangerously open to the siren call of fascism. If this backward swing gets a genuine start here there is grave danger that America will be thrown up a blind alley, perhaps for decades.

That is one way, apparently out, but up an alley.

The only other answer to capitalist chaos, the only alternative to fascism, is socialism, the utilization of machine economy as a stepping-stone to a new era.

This way out lies in the hands of the working-class. No other class in society will take this step, no other class is willing, no other class can. Thus the line is drawn. Fascism or forward to a workers' world, which shall it be?

Our task is clear.

With all possible haste we must get to the plastic sections of the proletariat which stands on the sidelines and make them conscious of the dangers and the futility of fascism, and conscious of their own inherent power and destiny in forcing society forward, not backward. This must be done, and done now.

A tool forged by the CPLA for the specific purpose of inspiring the workers to united action in the right direction is LABOR ACTION, a sound Marxian paper in the language of the workers. The problem faced is that of giving LABOR ACTION a wide distribution with limited funds. The problem is to raise funds. In America a labor paper cannot pay its way. This money must come in contributions from those who can give,—from workers, most of whom now are penniless, and from intellectuals and liberals who understand that this thing must be done, and that we must carry on.

If you realize that this is the only way to keep fascism from taking the upper hand; if you want to fight against this tragic backward step, and fight effectively, you will find your tool, already made, in LABOR ACTION. The effectiveness of LABOR ACTION will depend upon circulation, and this in turn upon the support it receives from those who have the means to give.

# · LABOR · AGE ·

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February-March, 1933

No. 1.

*We apologize to our readers for the late appearance of this February-March issue of LABOR AGE. The pre-occupation of some of our staff with the Brookwood controversy which is extensively discussed elsewhere in this issue plus the banking crisis are responsible for the delay. We trust our readers will feel that this number was worth waiting for!*

**E**LSEWHERE in this number documents bearing upon the Brookwood controversy and an extended analysis of the issues are given. That analysis sticks pretty close to

## Brookwood and the CPLA

That is as it should be. We agree with those splendid rebel students of Brookwood who assert that the charge that the Muste group wanted to make Brookwood a "CPLA school" and the contention that this was the sole issue at stake, constitutes an "over-simplification." Given the Brookwood set-up, the personalities, the shifting forces in the labor movement, the battle of Brookwood would have come if there had never been a CPLA. The CPLA did not cause this war, any more than the shooting of an archduke caused the Great War.

Nevertheless, a school which is a part of the labor movement and not merely operative on its fringes must have a character, a position of its own. It must be somewhere, it cannot be everywhere, in regard to the basic issues confronting the movement, especially in such a period as the present. As Trotsky has suggested recently, one who does not have an **opinion on such matters** is no Marxist, and one who has opinions but is silent about them is no revolutionist.

Brookwood had a large share in the formation of the CPLA. The Brookwood position was essentially the CPLA position. Naturally the CPLA wanted to work in close co-operation with Brookwood. The forces in the U. S. trying to form a realistic revolutionary movement rooted in American soil are all too few at best. Of course we wanted them utilized as efficiently as possible, though no motion to place Brookwood under its control was ever made at an N.E.C. meeting of the CPLA.

We could not anticipate that the desire for a close relationship would come to be regarded as treason to Brookwood, because we could not very well anticipate that David J. Saposs and J. C. Kennedy of the Brookwood staff would take a leading part in the CPLA convention in September, help to write its constitution, program and philosophy, and then three or four months later renounce this same organization, constitution, program and philosophy. No one seriously argues that any important change occurred in the CPLA between September and January. But these men without warning broadcast in January a public attack on the CPLA and on two of their colleagues at Brookwood, Muste and Tippet, and on a number of Brookwood graduates who are on the N.E.C. of the CPLA. The CPLA was a sect, "sowing dissension in the labor movement." If they held the same opinion of the CPLA in September as they did in January, they were either dishonest or irresponsible in playing the role they played in the convention. If they changed their opinion though the CPLA did not

change, they are convicted of being able to shift their political position with phenomenal ease. If they have attacked the CPLA though still believing that it has a contribution to make to the American labor movement, they are doubly irresponsible.

A sound movement never suffers from the loss of such elements. The real revolutionary forces have no use for them. This is our last word on the subject therefore. We turn to our work.



**T**HE fundamental need for a united mass labor party is set forth in an article elsewhere in this issue of LABOR AGE. People do not always get what they need, however.

## Labor Party, Roosevelt and Unemployed Leagues

Is there a chance that such a party will come into being in the near future? Where are the elements that would go to make it up? How can these elements be moved to action?

Any discussion of such questions at this time must take Franklin D. Roosevelt into account. For one thing, Labor cannot act effectively in this crisis, because it came up to the crisis weak, disorganized, and with no clear policy. The masses will not for the moment, therefore, turn to labor. So long as the immediate paralyzing crisis continues, they will look to the one agency which has any real or apparent power, and just now that is Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Even after things steady down a bit, assuming that that is in the cards, the unions, considerable sections of the workers, many farmers, will be disposed to "give Roosevelt a chance," to see whether his emergency measures produced any fairly permanent results.

If the crisis continues in an aggravated form and suffering forces mass revolts, such revolt will not in the immediate future be likely to express itself in political action in the narrow sense. People will feel that elections are too far away, that this is too slow a method for getting relief. They will march, demonstrate, strike. Unemployed leagues and farmers' holiday associations will hold the center of the stage with direct action, rather than political parties.

This does not mean, however, that the agitation for a Labor Party should cease even temporarily. It may be of secondary importance, but it is still tremendously important. Franklin Roosevelt will not set up a regime which gives the workers and farmers any real and permanent hope. His first big accomplishment will be to eliminate the little banks and make the big ones bigger and stronger. As one correspondent writes us, "Whatever is done is bound to have a joker in it and the country will be upset for a long time." The need for a party to serve as one of the means for emancipating the workers will be greater than ever.

Furthermore, the masses, however they may submit to a Rooseveltian dictatorship for the moment, there being no other in sight, have lost much of their faith in the old parties.

Where shall the propaganda for a mass labor-farmer party be concentrated then? The most hopeful field at the moment and in the months just ahead is in the various organizations of the unemployed.

Handle the situation in these unemployed organizations

badly and they will turn Fascist. Remember, they are composed of people who have no philosophy as yet except that of "prosperity" and "Americanism." Certainly a great potential force will go to waste if the problem is badly handled.

The leagues and councils should be non-partisan, taking in all workers, regardless of color, race, creed, politics. If that is done, they will be a unifying force in a working-class which is now in a desperately divided state. Let Socialists use the leagues to get at workers to vote Socialist, and Communists to appeal to them to vote Communist, and that opens the way for Republicans and Democrats to sing their songs. In the second place, you have created a division among the unemployed, even if they do not go back to the old parties.

It is one thing to use the unemployed leagues as a battleground for contending groups; it is a very different thing for the unemployed organizations to be driven by their own experience, as they inevitably will, to united, effective working-class political action. But they must be "driven" by their own experience, not by mechanical pressure from propagandists. To interpret their experience and so to educate them is the job of radicals.

Still another field where the same careful educational work for united political action must be carried on, is the mass economic organizations of the farmers. The poor farmers and the farm laborers, as well as the unemployed, will be forced to answer the question, How do we act on the political field since all hope of relief from the old parties is gone?

There are, in the third place, many unions, in some cases internationals like the United Textile Workers, in other cases locals, joint boards, state federations, city central bodies, which are on record for independent political action. In all the unions there are many individual members who are fed up with the old parties. Resolutions often remain on paper, however. There are plenty of cases where unions are on record for a labor party but the members don't know it.

CPLA'ers and all progressives and radicals must carry on a steady propaganda for mass labor-farmer politics in all these organizations. This is one of the slogans around which working-class unity can be built. And working-class unity is the need of the hour.

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**FOUR** months have rolled 'round since President William Green of the A. F. of L. declared at Cincinnati that racketeering was being destroyed "in a constructive way."

### **A. F. of L. Dare Not Kill Rackets**

What he meant by that no one knows. Certainly, he has contributed nothing to the discomfiture of

Theodore Brandle in New Jersey. The revolt there has come from the membership of the czar's own local and from the sudden "conversion" to anti-racketeering of Mayor Hague.

Sam Kaplan has been convicted. He is out for the time being. But the A. F. of L. has contributed little to that desired event. As a direct result of Green-Eliot policy, on the other hand, Harry Sherman is now in Kaplan's official shoes. The CPLA indicated strongly that Sherman was unfit for the position. For five years he has served as personnel man for the Paramount Corporation at the modest sum of \$25,000 per year and expenses. A personnel man does not pull down that sum of money from a large corporation without producing *quid pro quo*. That Sherman did, as the record in Perth Amboy and Paterson show.

Green allowed Sherman to slip in without a protest. The CPLA, on the other hand, filed a demand with President Eliot that he declare Sherman ineligible. We pointed to the fact that even President John L. Lewis of the United Mine Workers had created a stir in the labor world some years ago by exposing Frank Farrington of the Illinois Miners as personnel man for the Peabody Coal Company at \$25,000 a year. If it was scandal for Farrington to serve the Peabody interests, it was likewise a disgrace for Sherman to do the dirty work for the Paramount Company. And yet today this paid agent of the bosses is president of Local 306, with the silent approval of the A. F. of L.

Revelations coming to the fore in the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers in Newark indicate collusion between the union and the employers association, the Electrical Guild, to freeze out contractors outside the favored circle. We do not concern ourselves with the fate of these contractors. But we do say that the labor unions have sunk to a vile stage when they are nothing any longer than racketeering agencies for a ring of conspiring bosses.

Over and over, in union after union, we now see that a large portion of the A. F. of L. organizations' leaders are the convenient rough-house gangs for the racketeering employers.

We do not have to cite "Umbrella Mike" Boyle, the power in the I.B.E.W., with his Pierce Construction Co. We can close our eyes and hit upon union after union and find its leadership to be tin horn editions of Al Capone.

That is why William Green dare not act. The roots of labor racketeering go too deep into the A. F. of L. union leadership. They are developed by the very philosophy of the A. F. of L. itself. Cooperation with employers, "selling unionism to the bosses" instead of fighting for it, playing the dirty political game of the ward heelers of the two old parties—all of these dank characteristics of business unionism—are what the A. F. of L. stands for.

But Green is not alone. There are a lot of "nice people," breathing radical phrases, who dare not attack the labor racketeers any more than Green. They fear John L. Lewis. They fear the reactionary elements in the A. F. of L. They kissed the toes of Sam Kaplan and they embrace any racketeer that comes along, provided he says a good word for them or their group.

The present disgusting picture of labor leadership arises from the non-partisan, business unionism policy of the American Federation of Labor. It must be changed by an aroused union membership which has some other philosophy, an anti-capitalist philosophy. But the battle will be difficult as long as namby-pamby "radical" elements, rather than lose their own soft seats and statesmanlike positions, have not the courage to attack full force this thing of evil in the labor movement.

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**A** TOM Mooney Defense Conference was held in New York on Sunday, March 12. This was one of the preliminaries to the National Mooney Defense Conference scheduled for May 1 in Chicago. At the New York conference around 700 delegates were present.

### **The Mooney Defense Conference**

The overwhelming majority of these were from Communist organizations.

The Conference was far from being in fact a united front. The Socialist party was not represented and only a very few actual unions were there. This we regret. The N.E.C. of the CPLA has nevertheless decided to continue



in the Conference and will seek to bring about the broadest participation in it.

There was much of the usual Communist tactics of domination displayed in this conference. If the C.P. wants to have a united front with itself on the Mooney issue, that is its affair. If it wants a united front of all working-class forces in reality and not on paper, it must make a strenuous effort, as will the CPLA, to bring in all elements. That also implies that attention must be concentrated on develop-

ing a militant movement for Mooney's release, in which all elements and tendencies have substantial representation and in which for the time being attacks of a political nature are kept in the background.

We again call upon all organizations to unite. Divisions are more criminal now than ever. If unity proves impossible, then still all groups must work untiringly for Mooney's release and for the liberation of all class-war prisoners.

## Fascism In Germany

**D**ICTATORSHIP in Germany is an accomplished fact. What political and economic factors within and outside the government sustain or threaten its existence, however, remains to be seen. In a country whose people are living under the pressure of intolerable economic conditions, a man, equipped by nature with an extraordinary talent for organization, a demagogical genius, has stamped a movement out of the earth that lacks even the pretense of coherence, that has no fundamental idea, no original concept of social and economic reconstruction. The strength and appeal of the Hitlerite movement lies in the unerring touch with which it has hit upon those intangible but powerful prejudices and formless ideals that appeal to the imagination of the masses so much more readily than coordinated economic theory, however sound and reasonable. Nation, race, family, people, fatherland, kinship, loyalty, sacrifice, blood, soul—these are words to conjure with; and in the wake of this new Piper of Hamelin who plays upon them with a master's art, these children in spirit follow blindly into what they hope will be a better, a more beautiful, a *different* world. Those impulses that centuries have anchored in the Teutonic race—militarism, patriotism, monarchist convictions, anti-Semitic prejudice, sentimental tradition and the tendency to reflect deeply and not always coherently on the world and its affairs have been woven into a gay fabric of magic promise in the National Socialist program.

German Fascism, insofar as it possesses a definite program, is a movement of retrogression, of restoration of that which was. What are the social conditions the "Dritte Reich," that Fata Morgana of the Nazis, dream of? Reversal of capitalism to its earlier stages, reduction of large cities, the restoration of the farm to its place as the "home of the nation." "With sword and plow for honor and freedom" is the slogan with which Hitler conducts his back-to-the-farm movement. The racial plan of the National Socialists is negative rather than positive in scope and application. It concerns itself not at all with racial betterment, with eugenic advancement through improved living conditions, child and motherhood protection. It deals rather with the suppression and expulsion from the country of the alien and the Jew, tenets that have contributed not a little to Hitler's popularity, since they are directed to the removal from industry and professions of the competitor most hated by the German middle class.

The pseudo-Socialist portion of the Nazi program are not likely to play a role in the near future. Dr. Frick, Minister of the Interior, on coming into office, announced that the government "had no intention of embarking on currency and industrial experiments." Moreover the fact that the Chancellor met a number of the country's outstanding industrialists and bankers on the 21st of February indicates strongly that that part of the Nazi program which speaks of the "abolition of interest servitude" and the dissolution and socialization of trusts will be buried out of sight together with the demands for greater protection of

labor and for the welfare of the working masses. The more emphatic will be the attitude of the new government against labor unions, on the reduction of wages and on the destruction of the liberties and rights of the German worker. We need not emphasize here that it was the fear of the radicalization of German labor that made Hitler Chancellor and gave all political power into the hands of his National Socialist German Labor Party. In hoisting the flag of anti-Marxism, in destroying the Communist movement, in suppressing all labor newspapers, in imprisoning more than 10,000 functionaries of both parties, he executes the orders of his political and financial backers.

Serious opposition to Fascism can be expected therefore only from the two German labor parties which were precipitated by the coming of the Nationalists to power into a life and death struggle for existence. At the election of March 5 the labor parties made a good showing under the circumstances and proved that they have a reliable following of more than 11 million men and women of voting age. But by their refusal to join hands in the fight against Fascism, the C.P. which has been practically suppressed and the S.D.P. which has been deprived of all freedom of movement on the political as well as on the economic field, have missed their opportunity to lead the working class in a revolt and will be forced to resort to the ineffective and double-edged methods of guerilla warfare. The next few years will have to be devoted to a reorientation of labor's forces in Germany. The trade union movement is facing destruction; labor's political parties are paralyzed. The class conscious worker of Germany will have to consecrate himself wholeheartedly to the task of reorganizing the once so powerful German labor movement.

The Socialist Workers Party of Germany had the political outlook and the proletarian broadmindedness that is needed to perform this job. Unfortunately its secession from the Social Democratic Party came too late, and it was caught in the maelstrom of the present upheaval with its mission barely begun, without the necessary organizational strength to influence sufficiently large elements in both parties. The crisis which is now upon the German labor movement has led some of the founders of the S.W.P.—Max Seydewitz, Kurt Rosenfeld and Weckerle—to appeal to the members to return to the S.D.P. The minority of the National Executive Committee—Jacob Walcher, Paul Froelich, August Enderle, Dr. Eckstein and others—whose position on immediate tactics was overwhelmingly upheld by district conventions held during the last three months in all parts of Germany, countered this argument with the declaration that the greatest need of the labor movement in this crisis is a revolutionary socialist party, the Social Democratic Party being out of the question as an instrument for militant Socialist propaganda and action. The Socialist Workers Party has an important mission to perform in the slow process of reconstruction that must take place in the labor movement in Germany.

# Marx and Marxism After Fifty Years

by J. B. S. Hardman

SEVERAL days after Marx died the London *Daily News* forwarded to his daughter, Eleanor Aveling Marx, a cablegram received by that paper from "The Students of the Petrovskaya Agricultural Academy in Moscow" requesting F. Engels, the life-time co-worker and fellow theorist of Marx, to lay on the coffin of "the never to-be-forgotten author of *Capital*" a wreath with this inscription: "To the Defender of the Rights of the Workers in Theory and of their Realization in Practice." Several days later similar requests came from the students of the Technological Institute in St. Petersburg and of the University of Odessa. If students of any institution of higher learning on the North-American continent knew anything about Marx at the time of his death and were stirred by it to an expression of grief, we have no record of it. But the strong likelihood is that the name of Marx meant not a thing to the fraternity of the learned in the American universities of those days.

Yet that was a rather stirring time in American social history. Three years earlier, the A. F. of L.—then under a slightly different name—came into being. The Knights of Labor were just then rising to great national importance. And only three years later, the tragic Haymarket affair shook Chicago to its foundations, while simultaneously, in New York a forceful drive after power for labor and the unprivileged generally, was in progress under the leadership of Henry George, and the socialists were a part of the drive. But Marx's name was known to mighty few, although only eleven years earlier the seat of the International Workers Association, the organization in which Marx's creative revolutionary activity had culminated, was removed to the United States. We may consequently be appreciative of the fact that at least today, half a century later, in some, though not too many academic corners in the United States, the name of Karl Marx is beginning to assume a realness distinctive from that of the Four Marx Brothers, or the Hart, Schaffner and Marx Clothing Company.

But the fact that Russian university people keenly followed the life, the works and the activities of Marx, though under the czarist regime in Russia of those days Marx's works were under ban and cultural inter-

course with revolutionary movements and socialist ideas abroad was a crime severely punishable under the law, appears of significance in face of the ignorance of the studying youths in the United States, of the name and the teachings of the founder of the modern labor movement. The significance of this fact is reflected in the fate of the socialist movements of the two countries. We may, of course, maintain that the revolution in Russia came—and won, in thorough defiance of the social calendar and the theories of the all-wise, and that it should have instead first landed in industrial England or in the super-capitalist United States or in social-democratically prepared Germany. But be that as it may, the concern of Russian workers and intellectuals with revolutionary theory proved to be of crucial and positive value to the revolution when it came to Russia. For having so carelessly failed to be guided by calendar and atlas before it chose to land where it did, the Russian social revolution found, due to the above indicated cause, an army of skilled and willing workers for the mills of revolution and socialist construction even though the country lacked technicians and skilled workers effectively to run the shops and the factories of the socialized nation. No extraordinary powers of imagination are needed to visualize the state of confusion that would beset our own labor and intellectual periphery if we found ourselves today in the midst of an honest-to-goodness revolution. And for all we know, we may not be so hopelessly far from one as is customary to think. For it is not William Z. Foster, or Norman Thomas, or A. J. Muste who determine the hour of capitalist collapse; the Charlie Mitchells, and the Henry Fords, and the F. D. Roosevelts, the professional saviors of capitalism, are in fact its historic grave diggers. The truth has long been established that technical skill can be purchased for money and imported from overseas, but not social intelligence.

May those in our ranks who have the supremist contempt for "blue-prints," "hairsplitting" and "theory" give a moment's reflection to the simple fact that no sane person would engage in sewer cleaning, not to say

in coffin making or — God save the mark!—in bridge construction, without possessing a due measure of fitness for the work, and having engaged in some actual preparation for the task. Yet nothing more than will is generally presumed to be wanted for the ground work in the job called—social revolution. Marx was no respecter of ignorance.

## II.

Marx made two major contributions to the development of the present day world wide revolutionary movement:

1. He brought together, organized and illuminated with one central light all the criticisms of capitalism that were advanced before his time, and unified them into an effective and dynamic class weapon for the proletariat to use in the struggle for power and mastery; and

2. He gave cohesive force to the insipient and unavoidably divided revolutionary movements of the time, forging the central rallying point—the International Workers Association (the "First" International).

It is of utmost importance to emphasize the particular significance of the cardinal points in Marxian theory, the application of the dialectical method of thinking to the materialist interpretation of history and the development of this interpretation into a harmonious instrumentality of revealing revolutionary thinking. Of like importance is the theory of surplus value, the touchstone of Marxian economics and the driving force of his concept of the class struggle. Yet it is not the "discovery" of these theories or concepts that is the heart of Marxism. In fact, in their major lines the ideas of Marx were an outgrowth of the preliminary work done by his predecessors, the bourgeois critics of the bourgeois order. Referring to the theory of the class struggle in a letter to his American friend, Weydemeyer, in 1852 Marx wrote:

"I can't claim to have discovered the existence of classes in modern society or their strife against one another. Middle-class historians long ago described the evolution of the class struggles and political economists showed the economic physiology of the classes. I have added,

as a new contribution, the following propositions: (1) that the existence of classes is bound up with certain phases of material production; (2) that the class struggle leads necessarily to the dictatorship of the proletariat; (3) that the dictatorship is but the transition to the abolition of all classes and to the creation of a society free and equal."

The same holds good about the use of the dialectic method in the analysis of history and of the play of social forces. The bourgeois philosopher, Hegel, was the "maker" of the method and he used it rather as an escape from reality and as a justification of bourgeois professional acquiescence in the reactionary practices of the Prussian state. The materialist interpretation of history likewise came down to Marx from a string of gifted historians and thinkers of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. But whereas their materialism was made to serve the claims of the rising merchant class against the older control of society by the nobility and the clergy, Marx turned the materialist method, by applying to it the instrumentality of dialectics, into a proletarian weapon against the bourgeoisie and its historic claims. Marx, to use his own words, "stood the bourgeois theories on their heads." He applied them, after due modification, to purposes for which they were not intended, and he made them work.

But for all that Marx would have remained but another academic philosopher if he had confined himself solely to the statement of theoretic propositions. What has "made" Marx, is above all the fact that he carried his ideas into the "street," into the actual struggles of his days. He used theory as an enforcement to his engagement in the practical revolutionary struggle, and the latter as an intellectual feeder for his theoretical work. The sentence in his "Observations of Feuerbach": "Hitherto the philosophers have but variously interpreted the world; it is now their business to change it," succinctly states the essence of Marxism. It is the philosophy whose major business is to change the world.

Having set out to accelerate the pace of the imminent social revolution, and staking its consummation upon the working class, Marx did not, however, shut his eyes to reality. He did not sentimentalize or idealize the working class, as did many of his subsequent followers, who seemed to measure their devotion to the cause of revolution by the number or the strength of the adjectives which they apply to the

proletariat. Marx based his revolutionary course upon the struggle of the proletariat not because every proletarian is a born revolutionary or because the percentage of noble souls is higher in the working class than in the other classes, but because the objective conditions under which the workers live in the capitalist world leave no other way for them but to fight for a change of the social order which keeps them down on the lowest rung of the social ladder. Hence it is primarily important to cause the workers to think of their status under capitalism, to make them class conscious, and not to delude them with fanciful words before they are fully capable of putting life into what the words stand for. On this point, most illuminating is the argument advanced by Marx against the will-o-the-wisp revolutionaries and their idolatry of the "proletariat," in the session of September 15, 1850, the Central Committee of the Communist League. He said: "The minority substitutes dogmatism for a critical outlook, and idealism for materialist understanding. It sees the driving force of revolution not in real relations but in the will. We tell the workers: 'fifteen, twenty, and perhaps fifty years you will be obliged to wage war, civil and international, before you will change not only external conditions but yourselves as well, and make yourselves fit for political leadership. You [the opposition] say: 'we must at once attain to power or we might as well retire to sleep. Whereas we point out, especially to the German workers, the retarded development of the German proletariat, you, in the most vulgar manner, flatter the national sentiment and cast prejudices of the German craftsman, which, of course, has a popular appeal. Even as the democrats made a fetish of the word 'people' so you did with the word 'proletariat.' Like the democrats you substitute the revolutionary phrase for revolutionary development."

Marx was no sentimentalist or phrase-monger.

### III.

In the *Communist Manifesto* the philosophy and strategy of Marxism was given full and adequate expression. It was published in 1848 and according to the testimony of Wilhelm Liebknecht, a close collaborator of Karl Marx and one who continued his work in Germany after Marx was gone, the *Communist Manifesto* had not more than a dozen readers in the

whole of Germany as late as the seventies of the last century. But whether or not read by large numbers of people, the ideas of the *Manifesto* swept the minds and hearts of the front fighters of the working class in the leading countries of Europe, and its force does not seem to abate as time goes on. Professor Werner Sombart, an anti-Marxian who tirelessly fought Marxism over half a century wrote in 1923 that "even now 75 years after the publication of the *Manifesto*, it is difficult to read it without being thrilled by its tremendous intellectual force and by the prevailing realism of its ideas." Readers of *LABOR AGE* and adherents of the CPLA will especially sense the significance of the statement in the *Manifesto*: "The Communists are not a special party in contradistinction to the other labor parties. They have no interests apart from the interests of the whole proletariat. They set up no special principles according to which they wish to mould the proletarian movement."

The practical activity of Karl Marx as a revolutionist came to a climax in the formation of the International Workers' Association. He wrote to a friend these significant words concerning the purposes for which the International was brought into existence:

"The international was organized in order that in place of the socialist and semi-socialist sects there may be created a truly fighting organization of the working class.... Strictly speaking the International could not have come in being had the entire course of history not brought about the distintegration of the sectarian organizations. The development of socialist sects and the development of a genuine labor movement have at all times been in inverse ratio. If sects exist with a measure of historic justification for their existence it but indicates that the working class has not yet ripened for an independent historic movement. But when the working class reaches that maturity, all sects become a reactionary phenomenon."

The fiftieth anniversary of Marx's death will be but another formal date observance if the revolutionaries in the United States will not attempt to put the ideas of Marx and their vital significance to the revolutionary movement.



# Ohio Legislature of Workers and Farmers

by Arnold Johnson

**"T**HE governor has had time enough. He should be kicked out of office at once," declared a delegate at the Ohio Unemployed League Convention in Columbus, February 27-28.

"If one of us steals a loaf of bread, they throw us right into jail. The governor is no better than any of us," volunteered another. "Send us the information, petitions and everything. We will get him out of office."

One delegate after another jumped to the floor. From 35 counties, the 328 delegates representing 82,000 organized unemployed workers and farmers had come. They knew that they had power. Miners, steel-workers, railroaders, pottery workers, building trades workers, farmers; Negro and white, native and foreign born; Catholic, Protestant, Jew and Atheist—all were there in one solid working-class organization. This "first legislature of the workers and farmers of Ohio" decided unanimously to force the governor out of office although he had been inaugurated less than two months before. By mass pressure they will force his impeachment.

## To Impeach the Governor

Charges against the governor include his failure to get \$45,000,000 from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation in the face of starvation and great suffering; failure to serve the farmers in their fight against Wall Street; failure to draw upon the wealthy who received \$827,000,000 in interest and dividend payments in Ohio in 1932; his promotion of a sales tax; the closing of public schools; his action in behalf of the wealthy and the chambers of commerce; depriving the unemployed of the use of automobiles in violation of the U. S. Constitution and his oath of office; promotion of starvation and suffering by allowing inefficiency and extravagant overhead in relief work; personal extravagance; his failure to open factories and give the unemployed their jobs.

He stands indicted as being "un-American" in that his actions have destroyed the American standard of living. Private family life and the home have been broken up by sending the unemployed parents to poorhouses and their children to orphan homes. He has allowed water to be shut off in violation of health laws. Unemployed have been deprived of light and heat while public utility companies make big

profits. Foreclosures and evictions have wrecked the institution of the home. On these grounds the unemployed demand the governor's resignation at once, and are starting a march on the governor's mansion. "Evict Governor White!" is the cry.

## "And We're Not Yellow"

Bill Truax, fighting miner from Southeast Ohio, who has led many strikes and who was kicked out of the U. M. W. A. because he fought against the reactionary John L. Lewis, was chairman of the convention and directed the fight against capitalism. In his opening speech he was loudly cheered when he condemned every government official "from president to dog-catcher." He declared, "There are only two colors among the unemployed, the reds and the yellows, and we're not yellow." Cheering was tumultuous.

In two months Bill and I had traveled over 8,000 miles in a \$12 Dodge organizing in every county in the state, begging beds and food to make every penny count. With the weather at 15 below, in rain, snow, sleet, we worked "the cruising tactic," and this convention was the result.

Bill was elected president of the League by acclamation and long applause. By an attack upon capitalism, R. G. Lawrence of Columbus, later elected vice-president, welcomed the delegates. Verne Bauhof, unemployed leader, read the officers' report.

The report called for a national convention on July 4, "to draw up a new Declaration of Independence for the workers and farmers." The crowd cheered. "No matter what the means, factories and mines must be opened, and farms made to thrive!" The convention was off to a fighting start.

## United in Their Need

Without any intensive propaganda in advance, the delegates were united in their thinking. They were all united in the same economic battle. On this basis the convention was organized with complete trust in the workers themselves.

They told the story of misery in Ohio.

In one section relief was being given at the rate of 12 cents per person per week. Women were wearing burlap for clothes. In many places men were receiving \$6 per day for relief work in violation of law. Within view of the capital families were being fed at the rate of 50 cents per family per week. Families of miners were freezing. Farmers were being evicted and chain farms being organized by insurance companies. Courts had permitted the foreclosure of a farm when the signature of a 66-year old farmer had been forged to a mortgage. The signature of a dead man was forged as a witness. Women workers in a toy factory received as low as four cents a day in wages. Skilled mechanics in a table factory were receiving 7½ cents per hour. And wage cuts were threatened. In shoe factory towns, people were without shoes and factories idle. Even when factories operated the wages were so low that workers could not buy the shoes they made. Steel workers were victims of a war-time spy system. Grocers were brandishing guns and telling the unemployed that they had orders to "shoot to kill if they made any trouble."

## The Defenders of Starvation

The "liberal" mayor of Columbus had said, "All public officials are agreed in opposing any movement of the unemployed." Chambers of commerce attempted to throw a snag into the convention by prohibiting the packing houses and wholesalers from giving food. "Climb-on-us Clubs," as the Kiwanis is known to the unemployed, and "Farewell agents," otherwise known as "Welfare agencies," are trying to break the unemployed leagues. U.M.W.A. officials have been shouting to the miners not to join. County Commissioners and relief agents tried to bribe the unemployed in an effort to break the organization. Petty politicians tried to capture or break the leagues. Mayor Braught of the State Relief Commission had declared, "There is no starvation in Ohio."

These reports of conditions and actions of the enemy unified the workers and made them more determined to fight. "We do not countenance violence, but if the opposition starts any violence, we are ready to fight them on that ground," said Smith of Perry County, chairman of the committee to the legislature, to senators and assemblymen.

Farmers reported that they are "fixed" to give warm receptions to Wall Street insurance agents who come to evict them. Women advocate "nooses to remind the trustees of their duty." One Legionnaire says, "Sooner or later we will have to shoot these capitalists." Another says, "If we have another war, there will be two people who won't go—the guy who comes after me, and myself." And then they say, "Of course, we are not radicals."

In their fight against wage cuts on relief work one League told the story of a three-weeks' strike. Wages had been cut to 30 cents, then to 25 cents per hour. They struck. The trustees tried to get them to go to work in a few days at 30 cents per hour. Another week and they offered 35 cents. The League demanded "40 cents per hour, the truck driver and the road supervisor back on the job." Three weeks and they won every demand plus "more relief." During the strike the trustees did not dare to cut off relief. Another League reported winning a strike in a day. Now, leagues are calling for strikes in all parts of the State.

While officials of reactionary unions oppose the leagues, the unemployed leagues have supported militant tactics of the unions. Pottery workers went out on strike when the employer tried to cut wages in violation of a contract and immediately the local league stood with the strikers in the picket line and in preventing scabbing.

Mass pressure against public officials was reported by leagues—hunger marches, mass demonstrations, "permanent" committees to keep on the trail of trustees, city councils, county commissioners, with grievances and demands. Court injunctions have been defied. Machine gun and jail threats of a sheriff were met by organized action.

### Action!

Action! This word strikes the keynote of the convention.

The unemployed are learning about government by action. Evictions are being stopped by putting furniture back into houses and by mass pressure so that furniture cannot be removed. Persons are getting relief who have been dismissed by the agencies. Fights with school boards for the use of public schools for meetings of the unemployed resulted in victories every time. Barter plans came in for a pounding at the hands of the unemployed who have seen them tried—and fail. From everywhere came reports of activity—more and more action and pressure against officials.

Following a summarization of the day's reports by Louis Budenz, an old miner got up and gave a history of the struggles of organized labor against capitalism. He said he had kept his feet warm with hot bricks over the 150 miles he had journeyed to the legislature of the workers. A 1919 steel strike leader told how railroad and mine officials had worked to break that historic struggle. Today these men were united in their fight against capitalism and unemployment and for a workers' world.

The officers' report as presented by the temporary officers who had been elected at the Niles convention November 6, was thoroughly discussed by the delegates and adopted.

### Building a Dual Government

Voluntary organizers will cover every part of the State, organizing on the basis of the political sub-divisions of the State. Township and ward leagues will form county organizations which in turn will elect one representative to "a general State committee" of 88 counties. An executive committee with one member from each senatorial district will then be established. The executive officers, president, two vice-presidents, secretary, treasurer, are ex-officio members of the general State and executive committee. Thus mass pressure will be constantly brought on every public official in the State, and the workers will perfect their own government alongside of the present government.

George Perkins, a machinist and one of the vice-presidents, and V. C. Bauhof, a jack-of-all-trades, including township trustee and secretary, are pushing the organization of their districts in the eastern part of the State. Jim White, a miner from Hocking Valley and treasurer, wants "about a week" to organize Perry County. Then on to the next county. R. G. Lawrence from Columbus has already shown the power of his organizers by establishing 15 leagues of 5,000 members in four weeks.

### Minimum Existence Budget

In their demands to the governor, major attention was given to the problem of minimum existence. League members carefully planned a budget as a basis for relief. The lowest existence level for a family of man, wife and three children, is \$18.35 per week. This is not a basis for wage rates, but the State must provide relief on this basis.

In detail, the budget includes: food,

\$6.25; clothing, \$2.75; coal (for six months) \$1.15; light, \$.57; cooking fuel, \$.57; shelter, \$3.46; medical and dental care, \$1.50; household necessities, \$.50; personal necessities, \$.60; household replacements, \$1;—total per week, \$18.35.

A detailed statement of how these figures were arrived at was given to the governor. Research has convinced leagues that the relief standard of \$18.35 per week is possible. Other demands to the governor include: gas, light and water must not be shut off; utility rates must be reduced; cash relief; unemployed organizations must have majority representation on all relief boards; 40 cents per hour for all relief work; relief for single men and women; unemployment insurance to be paid by government, federal and state, and industry; free text books for schools; recognition by public officials of their responsibility to the public. Attention is called to auto tags for the unemployed. The League states, concluding, "To gain the above demands the organization shall use any means necessary under the circumstances obtaining at that time." In each case specific reasons for the demand are given. The demands were also presented to the Senators in Washington by committee.

### Other Demands

Other demands which are part of the program of the League as developed at the convention include: no evictions; no mortgage foreclosures; taxation of the wealthy; payment of teachers without salary reductions; schools to be kept open; old age pensions at 40; sickness insurance or compensation from industry and the State; no sales tax; six-hour day and five-day week without reduction in total wages; taxation of all securities; and provisions for homeless youths.

A resolution demanding the release of Tom Mooney was adopted.

The convention set a broad solid program growing out of the needs of the workers themselves. The principle of keeping free from domination by political groups was reaffirmed.

The week-end of July 4 will see another Ohio State convention of unemployed workers and farmers in conjunction with the national convention at Columbus.

Two thousand delegates representing millions of unemployed in the states will gather for the national convention.

At that convention the new Declaration of Independence for workers and farmers will make history in the march toward a workers' republic.



# The Need For A United Labor Party

by A. J. Muste

**A**N official of a building trades union, brought up in the tradition of the British I.L.P. and so not exactly typical of the American building trades official, was recently speaking to a labor group about the need of a labor party in the U. S. He said that for months he had tried the experiment with all kinds of working-class audiences, in union halls, at street-corner meetings under Socialist, Communist or even old party auspices, of mingling with the crowd and quietly asking large numbers of individuals their opinions in regard to a labor party. Invariably he found the same reaction from the workers. It might be expressed thus: "Why can't we have a single united party of labor and the farmers? Labor ought to vote the way it strikes; the old parties are boss parties; we must have our own political party just as we have our own unions. But it is no use if labor won't stand together. We can't get anywhere with all the small political parties in the field today."

There is every reason to believe that that reaction is typical of the feeling among the more intelligent workers throughout the country. Among the leaders and members of existing political parties and groups and among the intellectuals one finds, however, a good deal of opposition to or doubt about the idea. In part this is due to the natural feeling of each party that it is as near perfection as one can hope to find, and that if everybody would just join it, labor would have its party and a smashing big one. Some of the doubts are, however, of a more fundamental nature, and we need to make clear the historical necessity of a united mass labor party in the U. S.

## Divided Labor— Prey of Fascism

If anything has been made clear by the war and post-war history of labor, it is that a divided labor movement is no match for reactionary forces which at the critical moment assume a Fascist form.

What happens in countries like Italy and Germany, for example, when the labor movement is split up, when the militants and revolutionists break away from the main masses in the unions, on the political field, in the cooperatives, and form separate organizations? The answer is Fascism. In a period of disturbance, Fascism, which is also militant, which repudiates the sham of

"democracy," which rejects many elements in the present set-up (repudiates the reparations in Germany, for example, and promises to overthrow the rule of the international bankers) has certain advantages over the labor movement, certainly over a divided labor movement.

In the first place, farmers in these more advanced countries are not in the habit of working with the labor movement; they have a more individualistic point of view. When they are in distress and feel that there must be a change, they do not naturally turn to labor leadership. Fascism is likely to appeal to them. In the second place, Fascism can usually count on the support of the church, which will probably fight for "democracy" up to a certain point as the Centrists are doing in Germany today, and as the Popular Party under the lead of Dom Sturzo did in Italy some years ago. But when it comes to a show-down the church will throw its support to Fascism rather than Labor. There are even certain elements among the workers, those, for example, under the domination of reactionary elements in the churches, who, if the labor movement is divided, are likely to take that as an excuse for going Fascist.

Many white-collar workers, clerical, technical, and professional, are likely to feel that joining labor is joining an "inferior" group, and they, therefore, form an easy prey to an ultra-nationalistic Fascism.

In the next place, capitalists in a showdown will also choose Fascism rather than Communism, which means that Fascism can count on access to the money-bags. Finally, capitalist foreign powers will, as has been abundantly demonstrated, look with a mild eye sometimes on a Fascist regime, but they will maintain an attitude of implacable hostility toward the effort of any people to build a genuine workers' republic.

## A Force Against Reaction

Against such mighty forces as these a united labor movement may be able to make a stand. If labor were united, for example, the farmers would be much more likely to be attracted to what would then be a very powerful organization, in a position to be of great service to them. When labor is

divided, the church can widen the breach by disowning the left-wing elements as irreligious. Reactionary elements in the church are much less likely to be successful in this effort if labor stands together. It is very difficult to raise the religious issue against a united working class.

Except in a united mass labor party (under whatever name) it is not likely that Socialists and Communists can be gotten together. "Socialism" or social-democracy is one labor philosophy, Communism is another. There is a tremendous difference between them. These groups cannot unite on the basis of a common philosophy. If, however, we are to have a separate Socialist and a separate Communist movement in the U.S. both will probably remain weak and ineffective. The S. P. under these circumstances will be constantly drained of its most militant elements, it will lean on the less revolutionary element among the intellectuals, and it will not be able to appear before the workers as the one political voice of labor.

The Communist Party, on the other hand, will not be able to speak as the one voice of labor either. It will often have to be a divisive force. Political differences will split the unions. Socialists will see to it that certain sections of the working-class will be alienated from the Communists. It is altogether unlikely that Communists under these circumstances could build up an effective revolutionary movement, but they cannot be merely ignored. They would certainly torment the Socialists as much as the Socialists could torment them.

If there were a mass organization of labor and the farmers which had a sound class basis and which would therefore be sounder and more trustworthy, even while its program and philosophy were of an elementary character, then a propaganda society composed mainly of intellectuals, both Socialists and Communists might work inside it. Where else, except in the unions and other economic organizations, would they find so favorable a soil for educational seed? In any event we see no other way in which Socialists and Communists might be brought together.

There are a very considerable number of militants and revolutionists in the U.S. today who cannot work at all, or at least not with any degree of satisfaction, in either S. P. or C. P. These also would enthusiastically work in a

mass labor party with elements from which they differ, believing that such a party is a historical necessity in the present stage of American working-class development.

Probably there would be a re-grouping of revolutionary elements within the mass labor party which would result in a much more effective revolutionary movement, one much closer to the American soil than we now have.

## Bring Farmers and Unions Together

Many other considerations point to the necessity of existing parties and groups turning their backs on sectarian tendencies and uniting to sponsor a labor party. Industrial workers must be the base and spear-head of a working-class party in an industrial civilization, but the allegiance of certain sections of the farmers is needed. They will go Fascist eventually if they are not tied to labor. But is there the slightest sign that any large sections of farmers are turning to either the S.P. or C.P.? Does any careful observer doubt that it would be much easier to swing them into a united labor party with the unions, the cooperatives, etc., than into the S.P. or C.P.?

What of the unions? Let the relations between the S.P. and C.P. remain as they are, and the unions will be the battle-ground of contending political groups, instead of the economic base for working-class political power. There is no sign that the unions any more than the farmers are moving into either of the above parties. There is no such connection between them and the unions as has obtained in Europe. To the unions in the United States they are "outsiders." If the railroad unions, for example, go in for independent political action, it will not be because they are won over by the arguments of Socialists or Communists, but because necessity compels them to break with the old parties. They will then in all probability do just what they started to do in 1919-24, viz., back a labor or farmer-labor party. As soon as a few big unions do that they will have overnight a more substantial political force than the S.P. or the C.P. and these latter will have to join in or simply be isolated from the living forces in the situation.

There are large numbers of workers in the churches, both Catholic and Protestant, whom it will be exceedingly difficult to get into either the S.P. or the C.P., but they might be gotten into a farmer and labor party. If they remain politically aloof from other workers, the labor movement will be

terribly weakened. We may even see ecclesiastically-dominated unions formed as in Europe.

Whether we look to years of comparatively gradual growth of the labor movement or to swift developments in a revolutionary situation, American workers must be weaned away from their individualistic, pro-capitalist, non-labor (in many cases anti-labor) bias. Now such transitions are not effected by one individual after another coming to espouse as a result of "education" and logical processes a different philosophy. They come because masses under pressure shift their allegiance to new organizations and movements which give them the slogans and theories they need in the new situation. That means that the next big step, in addition to getting workers and farmers into economic organizations, is to get them to quit voting the Republican or Democratic ticket.

## Peanut Whistles Against a Hurricane

But if that is to happen something will have to touch the imagination of the plain, everyday "worker on the street"—the worker in Oshkosh, Tacoma, Pittsburgh, Birmingham, Hartford, Toledo—not only in Union Square, New York. If the babel of voices which now comes to the worker from the radical camp could be silenced, if one clear united voice could sound out from that babel, calling on all workers and farmers to stand together in a great fighting labor party, such a call for unity of labor in this world crisis, unity against reactionary forces which threaten to sweep away the labor movement in every industrial country, might touch the imagination of the now bewildered masses and get a vast response. Nothing else will. The separate voices of Socialists, Stalinists, Trotskyists, Lovestoneites and the rest are peanut-whistles against a hurricane. The American masses know it and will not respond.

A word of caution must here be inserted. If existing political parties and groups persist in following a sectarian course, it is possible that some "labor party" movement will nevertheless get under way, as various elements in the population despair of getting anything from the old parties. There are states for example, where conservative trade union bodies are thinking seriously of sponsoring "a labor party." There are instances where groups under strong ecclesiastical influence are apparently thinking "labor party." It is not at all impossible that elements which are primarily liberal will try to form a

"third party," unless Roosevelt works miracles, and that such a party would have at least a temporary attraction for sections of farmers and workers.

If such movements get under way and the radical elements are outside them, the scene will be still further confused. Potential recruits for a genuine labor party will be diverted into other groups. Such parties, devoid of radical elements, will be dominated by the right wing. The place of radicals is inside genuine mass movements to keep them sound and out of the control of confused and non-radical elements.

"Yes, but unions and labor parties," the left-winger answers, "get in the habit of compromising, of trying to get results by parliamentary methods, electing candidates to office under the capitalist system. Then, when the need for drastic action, for taking some actual step toward the establishment of a working-class regime comes, they draw back. They fail. The only thing we can rely on is a disciplined revolutionary party. And such a force can keep itself truly revolutionary only if it keeps itself separate politically and builds up its own unions, cooperatives and cultural organizations." This may be true. If those who advance this argument, however, are realistic, if they face the facts, they must confess that in making this argument they pass sentence of death on the labor movement in all such countries as the United States, Great Britain, France and Germany. If it is ever safe to prophesy, it is safe to predict that a divided labor movement in such countries means the triumph of Fascism.

## Is It Purity or Death?

Must we then resign ourselves to complete despair on the ground that if a divided labor movement will be an easy prey for Fascism, a united labor movement will be too slow, too cautious, too lacking in militancy and vision, to take power and to build a new social order in which there will be bread, security, and peace for all the workers, and no place whatever for any shirkers?

We do not believe that the truth of this last proposition has yet been proved. Of course, a movement including all elements in the working class will not want at first to proceed as rapidly as the most extreme elements, if left to themselves, would wish to do. On the other hand, to suppose that a handful of red-hot revolutionists, off in their own sectarian unions, who in addition to opposition

(Continued on page 28)

# American Revolt

by B. H. Williams

**"S**TRIKING Wisconsin dairy farmers dump thousands of gallons of scab milk on highways." "Farmers of Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota, Michigan, Ohio, and other nearby States halt bank and insurance company foreclosures of farm mortgages by organized mass action." "One hundred thousand unemployed in Chicago demonstrate successfully against proposed relief cut." "Five hundred delegates from Ohio unemployed organizations assemble in 'Unemployed Legislature' at Columbus." "Thousands of auto workers battle against wage cuts in Detroit." "Illinois miners and their wives face guns of thugs and militia in heroic struggle against starvation and boss-controlled unionism."

These are a few surface manifestations of what promises to become a widespread movement of revolt in the most distinctively American sector of the United States. The Middle West is once again insurgent!

Once again? inquires some one unacquainted with American history either at first hand or from the more dubious as well as tedious process of digging it out of the archives. But, from one who, like the writer, has been in almost continuous contact with the social life of this section for nearly half a century, the answer must be emphatically, "Yes, this is not the first revolt. The father handed along something to the son."

Behold the Nebraska scene as the writer viewed it for the first time in '88: Topographically, as far as eye could range, no sign of tree, rock or hill; mostly unbroken sod, with herds of cattle browsing leisurely on the buffalo grass; sod houses and outbuildings scattered here and there upon the newly-occupied homesteads not yet "proved up" on. No surface roads, no automobiles. Pioneer grain and stock farmers at the mercy of land-subsidized railroad companies charging excessive freight rates, and of implement manufacturers who sold farming machinery in Central Europe at prices 25 to 50 per cent below those charged to these American farmers. A large proportion of these settlers coming fresh from struggles in Eastern industrial districts—members of the old Knights of Labor and proud of their former connections with that once powerful organization; ready to fight at the drop of the hat.

And right at the outset of these apparently unpromising pioneer conditions the revolt started. The K. of L. spirit would not be denied: The Farmers' Alliance sprang into being and spread like wildfire. "Monopoly" must be destroyed; the railroads must be curbed; the "money system" had to be reformed. Every country schoolhouse became a forum; fiery orators forged to the front; many pamphlets were written and circulated everywhere. The People's Party emerged; congressmen and senators sent to Washington; State governments captured; railroad rate and other legislation passed by legislatures only to be killed by subservient governors or by hostile supreme courts.

This political revolt, reflecting underlying economic grievances, threw a big scare into the midst of Wall Street and its political henchmen, which however, abated with the intervention of Bryanism in '96. It was not for the middle class, as such, to conquer big business and halt the development of capitalism to its logical conclusion.

So the Middle West settled to its destiny—to a period of ripening, of apparent unification, during which for the most part it stood out as the conservative bulwark of American capitalism. Heads of Middle West schools and colleges boasted that "socialist and other subversive ideas creeping into the East from Europe" would be halted at their portals. Business men emerged as self-satisfied Babbits. Farmers prospered and were put in a privileged class through prohibitive land values operating to keep out poor white trash while widening the gap between farm owner and farm proletariat.

For a time, at least, the developing contradictions of capitalism went on unperceived by the Middle West. But those contradictions were not marking time. Economic and social attractions drew the young virile farm population to the cities; for a time nomadic seasonal workers supplied the labor power, to be supplanted in turn by technical devices. Surfaced roads, expensive schools and other "improvements" sent taxes sky-rocketing, while prices of farm products, enjoying a boom during the war period, shortly

afterwards went back to "normal" in a hurry. The new highways, together with the ranging automobile and the chain store, squeezed the self-assurance out of the small-town Babbit, leaving him stranded on his desert isle of "rugged individualism." The smaller farmers, overwhelmed by mortgages and taxes, bankrupt by thousands, becoming tenants of bankers and insurance companies or joining the already overcrowded proletariat of city and country.

All of this happened before the '29 debacle in Wall Street. The subsequent leveling process of the depression has reduced the Middle West population, like that of the rest of the country, very nearly if not quite to the status of true proletarians, "who have nothing to lose but their chains."

Is not this the situation envisioned by Karl Marx and his associates as the prerequisite to social revolution? In any event, the revolting farmers and workers of the Middle West cannot simply follow in the footsteps of their fathers. Capitalism in the early '90's had still a long way to go in point of fact if not in time; it would not be denied, and as a consequence, Populism stands out in history as a reactionary revolt. Today, the situation is reversed; capitalism, having completed its development and having arrived at an impasse, the revolt of the Middle West has revolutionary implications and may assume revolutionary proportions. It is essential to that end to cement and maintain unbroken the growing solidarity between city and country—between the industrial proletariat and the farmer.

It is logical that the Middle West should take the lead in this promising revolt against capitalism. Unlike the East, the Middle West (outside of a few large cities) is not hampered by foreign blocs with alien languages and traditions. Unlike the South, it has no "race" question which now as in Civil War days keeps the poor white on the side of the white boss against the poor black. Unlike the West, it is a generation or more removed from pioneer traditions.

While prophecy is risky in these rapidly changing times, we may at least hope that the unity of the American workers to end capitalism will grow out of this promising insurgency of the Middle West.

# We Can Organize the Jobless

by Louis Francis Budenz

**O**HIO'S Unemployed League convention attracts a widespread and representative group of worker and farmer delegates. It adopts a militant program, and throughout its six sessions reveals the vigorous temper of the unemployed. The enthusiastic response to the message of organization shown by the preliminary campaign in preparation for the convention is an augury of growing mass movements of the jobless in their own defense.

From other centers—Allentown for example—come reports of the increased halting of evictions and sheriff's sales through mass action. In Pittsburgh, 15,000 unemployed enroll in the Unemployed Citizens' League in a comparatively short time. They embark on a purely fighting policy, and stop evictions right and left. Thus far, the Pittsburgh effort nails in the head the argument that effective leagues must be started on so-called self-help.

The St. Louis U. C. L. rids itself of the onus of "self-help" and opens a more virile campaign with a successful conference.

Such current events, of which there are many of similar trend, call for supplementary observations to those made in the December-January issue.

What is happening in these cases is an index of what can be made to happen in a larger way. The following seem to be conclusions which grow logically out of present developments:

1. *Unemployed organization must become a crusade, spreading as rapidly as possible and into as wide an area as possible.* The business of building a state league is the basis for this activity. The jobless are awaiting organization—of the right kind. The "cruising" method of building contacts must be increasingly resorted to. If proper judgment is used, the right sort of leaders will be found in each local community. The organizers to do this job must necessarily feel this spirit of the thing. They must be of the workers and with the workers. The crisis that we are in is too great for us to nurse organizations along. Personal contact has always been the method for getting the workers together, and the personnel to carry on such contacts in the proper way is as yet so small that it must work incessantly and cover as much ground as possible.

2. *Reliance upon the workers and their local leadership is a necessary*

*corollary of the above.* In the mining regions, active and militant former members of the union can be found, around whom local units will rally, almost automatically. In other centers, such leadership must be uncovered out of the workers' ranks themselves. It is surprising how easy it is, comparatively, to hit upon such contacts today. Responsibility should be placed upon those local active men and upon the local leagues to carry on through their own initiative, on the basis of their own situation and of what other leagues have done. The duty of the organizers of jobless organizations is not to fret over every possible difficulty that may confront these organizations, but to make occasional visits for conference and the outlining of programs. Unless local leadership and initiative are developed, we cannot erect a new labor movement in this country. That politicians will seek to bore into the league control, we know. That obstacles and internal difficulties will arise from time to time is certain. But the reliance upon proper local leadership and the spirit put into the local leagues will largely determine how they meet these crises.

3. *The healthiest movement can start in the smaller city, the farm country and the mining regions and spread from there to the state metropolises.* The smaller place is more homogeneous. Once a start is made, it is easier to rally a representative proportion of the unemployed to what is in reality a workers' community venture. The local school house, as everywhere is the case in Ohio, should be the meeting place of the local leagues. Moreover, what is called large "city radicalism" has a hard time making headway in the country and the smaller city. But when militant action itself comes out of these latter places, the city worker will respond. The creation of a state league, rooted in the various communities throughout the particular commonwealth involved, comes most successfully from the smaller units whose fire and drive invade the city and carry the workers there along.

4. *Local leagues, to insure their continuous life and representative character, should in fact as well as in name be free from the domination of any*

*particular political party group.* Radical elements too often have proceeded on the theory that the workers have no intelligence. No greater blunder could be made. The real fact is, that the workers' sources of information are frequently limited. It is worth while to state the often-repeated phrase, that they must learn where to go from their own experiences. Any attempt to force a particular party designation or loyalty upon them will split the leagues and lead to sharp rebuff. An information and research center, created by the state league itself, is the proper way to co-operate in interpreting these experiences to the workers. The rank and file must know that the actions taken, whether industrial or political, are their own actions and if any united labor political effort arises that it is their own party. Because of this, it seems to become clearer right along that a Farmer-Labor Party development will come out of the unemployment league efforts, and that that is the only form of workers political action on any wide scale that can come out of them. The main thing is that the leagues stand together long enough and go through enough fights to realize themselves that this is the way they must go.

At the same time, if large scale direct action is called for by future events, a league based on workers' community solidarity can function that way more effectively. Leagues have already been crippled by the attempt to get them prematurely to adopt some particularly radical philosophy. The only way to avoid such dangers is to make the leagues in actuality democratic organs of all the community's unemployed, regardless of superficial differences among them.

5. *Organizers are called for by these developments who can move rapidly, "live on the country" and obtain their lodgings from fellow-workers and friends of the cause.* The "brass tacks" stage has been reached in this work. Those who are going into the field in this effort are going to workers who are largely penniless. Moreover, the depression is on! Large funds and financial agencies cannot be expected to support such a workers' revolutionary movement. Organizers must serve without salaries, and much of their maintenance must be raised as they go, with the cooperation of the

(Continued on page 29)



# Blazing Trails in Brooklyn

**C**APITAL has rarely known a happy hunting ground such as electric light and power. The history of this utility industry is unique in many respects. Developed within the last half century, it resulted from harnessing the most efficient and powerful form of energy yet captured by man. Today it is a basic necessity in the daily life of the entire population.

In the early days, electricity was a mystic and terrifying force. Contact with apparently inert matter often meant instantaneous and violent death. Today the danger persists but the romance of pioneering with a strange and mystic force has given way to the stark realities of economics.

The light and power industry came late in the development of capitalism, but capital has never known a field so rich in profits and where labor receives so little in return for its product. The average American industry yields two-thirds of the product to labor and one-third to capital, according to economists. The light and power industry, however, yields two-thirds to capital and only one-third to labor. In 1933 the record will be even more startling. One billion dollars will go to electric utility stock and bondholders, while 210,000 workers will receive less than one-third that sum.

The striking feature of this industry is that depressions and panics have not materially affected its profits. The present crisis through which the country is passing has hardly touched the income of this industry. When the past three years are compared with the peak year of prosperity, it is found that light and power revenue has fallen less than 1 per cent a year under 1929. Dividends and interest of operating companies have been paid in full.

## What About the Workers?

But workers in the industry have been kept close to the subsistence level although profits have multiplied by thirty times since 1902. Workers who received an average annual wage of \$700 twenty years ago, received in the boom years of prosperity an average of only \$25 a week. Yet technological improvements enable the owners of the industry to obtain 300 per cent more electricity with the same number of employees as thirty years ago.

Eighty-five million people in electrically lighted homes have been made the unwilling accomplices of this tyranny of the power industry. Domest-

## Edison Employees Learn Economics

by Jerome Count

tic consumers are paying one-third of the electric bill of the nation although they receive less than 15 per cent of all power consumed. During the depression, the domestic consumer has been the backbone of the industry, and has borne the brunt of the gigantic dividend burden of \$600,000,000 per annum.

The franchise and monopoly systems under which the utilities operate compel the great mass of American people to buy their electricity from local companies regardless of their rate and labor policies. Last year consumers in the United States paid close to one and a third billion dollars for electric energy. It has been estimated by Morris Llewellyn Cooke that domestic consumers alone are being overcharged \$300,000,000 per year for their electricity.

Some understanding of the unparalleled greed of the financial interests can be gained from the collapse of some of the light and power holding companies. Those who were responsible for milking the public of billions of dollars for holding company securities, recklessly built up a system that has been unable to withstand even one per cent average decrease in revenues throughout three years of depression. Average annual revenues during the depression have been only one per cent below the year 1929 but even this small decrease was too great a drain for the holding company pyramids—so close to the wind were the great financial captains sailing.

In the case of the notorious Middle West Utilities Company, for instance, with 76 operating companies as subsidiaries, the receivers of this Insull monstrosity report that income from electric sales decreased only 7 per cent in 1932. Even this 7 per cent depression decrease is more apparent than real, since the power industry made substantial gains in profits and income for almost two years *after the depression set in*. It was not until the year 1931 that there was any decline in revenue in the power industry throughout the nation and in that year the decrease was only 1 per cent. This "decrease," however, was in fact twenty million dollars *above* the income of the

year of our Prosperity 1929. Holding companies collapsed notwithstanding!

## "Public Be Damned"

The public is bled at both ends, once as an investor and then as consumer. Thousands of small consumers yielded to the pressure of power propaganda and bought securities in what they thought were the companies owning and operating the plants that supplied them with energy. When receiverships came, customers found that their securities were worthless holding company stocks, but that the usual electric bill had to be paid nevertheless.

An executive of an operating company recently made this bald admission: "It was obvious even in boom times that those speculators who bought operating utilities at prices far above any figure on which a legitimate reasonable return could be earned, were interested more in the sale of the resultant holding company securities than they were in the real, though often exaggerated, economies that could be effected, and that thus the promotion was designed to unload inflated holding company securities upon unwary investors who in their innocence thought that they were purchasing securities of public utility companies."

Millions of dollars in electrical appliances were bought by consumers in the belief that they were swelling the coffers of the power company in which they owned stock and from which they bought electricity. The appliances were bought on the installment plan and when the depression came and dividends on the holding company stock ceased, an army of consumers lost their electric refrigerators and heaters along with their stock and dividends.

The consumer who still owns holding company stock has been placed in a position where he defends the high rate policies of the utilities. He reads the annual reports of his holding company and finds that the fund available for dividends is gradually being reduced to the danger point where the annual dividend may be cut. He does not yet understand that the subsidiaries, the operating companies, are yielding vast profits but yet insufficient to pay full dividends on excessive holding company stocks that were dishonestly and recklessly floated by the financial interests.

For many years the sale of electric utility stock was deliberately aimed to



place the consumer in this position of an allegiance divided against himself. Non-voting stock was palmed off on the consumer or stock of speculative holding companies in which the consumer had no opportunity to shape the policies of operating companies. Such stock was sold to consumers to the extent of hundreds of millions of dollars every year.

### Tricking the Workers

The same trickery was practiced on employees of the operating companies. Stock and electrical appliances were sold to employees under high pressure. When the utilities discharged tens of thousands of workers in 1931 and 1932 many of them automatically lost stock, dividends and the appliances upon which they could no longer pay the weekly installments. Nevertheless these employees, under the spell of stock ownership, were deluded into defending the high rate policies of their companies. Many of them still do not understand that they lost their jobs with operating companies because of the terrific pressure to keep up dividend payments on the excessive stock issues of the holding companies, and not because of any substantial loss of profits in the light and power industry.

The complete failure of the workers to organize themselves in this industry has many causes. First, workers were deluded with that romantic pioneering spirit that is found in the early days of developing a remarkable force such as electricity. When this spirit became dulled by the routine of mechanized labor, it was replaced by the deliberate propaganda which linked up the workers with the "spirit of service" of the "great public corporations." The public utilities are peculiarly adaptable to this deception of labor. The details of the vast capital and profit structure of the utilities are known to very few workers. The relation of profits to wages and rates has not yet been driven home to them.

Recently, however, the light and power industry has approached the saturation point in its sale of electricity for minimum usage. Subsequent development of the industry will require high pressure sales methods. That is the beginning of the workers' education in the fundamental economics of his industry. When sales cannot be increased except under high pressure, when the public stops yielding additional profits, overcapitalized industry begins milking the cow on the other side. Still more intensive mechanization of the industry occurs and more labor is replaced. Economies are forced and further lay-offs occur.

Wage cutting below subsistence levels is resorted to so as to maintain dividends, bond interest and other capital charges.

The light and power industry has entered this stage. Almost 100,000 workers laid off in 1931 and 1932 will not be re-hired. Two hundred thousand employees remaining in the industry are in daily fear of being discharged and receiving further wage cuts. Their fears are not unfounded. They are learning a sound lesson in the economics of capitalism.

### How Workers Are Robbed

The jobs and wages of these workers are endangered by the intense pressure to maintain dividends and interest on thirteen billion dollars capital. This is the lesson that these employees are learning by bitter experience.

The great mass of consumers of light and power have been unaware of these facts. They know that their use of electricity has been substantially increased in the last few years, but they assume that the lay-offs of employees in this industry has been caused by the general depression.

The failure of the consumer to receive reduced rates, however, results from the same general cause. The gigantic capital load upon the light and power industry precludes the possibility of any substantial rate reduction until the pressure of dividends and bond interest is relieved by public ownership.

Brooklyn Edison Company presents all these factors in perfect form. Two and a half million people are compelled to support a capital load of \$250,000,000, in order to obtain electricity that costs only a fraction of a cent per kilowatt hour to produce. \$20,000,000 a year must be levied by Brooklyn Edison capital for dividends and interest and to maintain the value of securities. Although the company's revenues are practically unaffected by the depression, 5,000 employees were laid off in 1931 and 1932. The nine thousand employees remaining with the company live in daily fear of losing their jobs and wages.

### The B.E.E. Teaches Economics

The Brotherhood of Edison Employees has done a remarkable job in teaching the economics of this company to the workers. Every employee of the Brooklyn Edison knows that while thousands of his fellow workers lost their jobs and suffered wage cuts, the Company paid out \$19,000,000 in dividends to its stockholders. These workers know that the company had

\$50,000,000 in reserves and surplus for the protection of stockholders, while thousands of laid-off employees were begging subsistence from relief agencies.

Brooklyn Edison has become the testing ground of utility labor throughout the nation. Employees of this company are hammering out practical methods of overcoming the fear of utility employees who have been cowed for years by company propaganda and suppression. Consumers have been found eager to join forces with utility employees in expressing the demand for security of employment and lower electric rates.

Tens of thousands of Brooklyn consumers recently blazed a pioneer trail in the country-wide fight against the light and power utilities. An innocent slogan—"Dine by Candlelight"—was the banner under which tens of thousands of consumers have expressed their dramatic protest against the labor and rate policies of Brooklyn Edison.

Not content with this measure, Brooklyn consumers' protests have taken a new and more direct form — refusal to pay the Company's profits unless it employed a collector to call at the consumers' home to receive the profits. Three lessons are learned when the consumer adopts this course: The amount of profits in every bill, that utility employees are in distress despite the profits, and that the consumer commands a powerful weapon. The utility employee learns that the consumer is backing him, that the Company receives 30 per cent profits and that direct action works.

These are new weapons that have been forged by the militant demand for relief from private profiteering in vital community functions. The success of these movements will mark a new chapter in American Labor History.

When the inexorable laws of Brooklyn Edison capital operate to discharge thousands more workers, they will no longer accept their destitution as the mystical operation of fate.

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# Whither Brookwood

**"B**ROOKWOOD turned right and we left." Thus 19 out of the 28 students in residence at Brookwood Labor College explained their resignation from the school after the Annual Meeting in March. They have gone to their unions and unemployed leagues, out into the field, to carry on labor's struggle. They left five professors, J. C. Kennedy, D. J. Saposs, Josephine Colby, Helen Norton and Mark Starr, and eight students behind them at Katonah who are going through the motions of finishing up the school year.

The rebel students left after the Annual Meeting had repudiated the policies of A. J. Muste, director of the school since its founding in 1921, and Tom Tippet, for several years past the extension director. Muste and Tippet resigned all their posts at Brookwood after a statement of policy which they deemed "in part vague, in part reactionary" had been adopted. With them went Lucile Kohn, lecturer in economics, and the entire administrative staff, Cara Cook, Cal Bellaver, Doris Prenner, Eleanor Steven and Beatrice Van Duvall. It is known that large numbers of the most active graduates also supported the Muste-Tippet group.

This break at Brookwood is an event of first-rate importance in the American workers' education movement. As the Board which repudiated Muste's policies said in its own report: "Brookwood is (or was?) the outstanding workers' education institution in the United States." An analysis of what has happened is in order. Are the rebel students correct when they say that they left because "Brookwood turned right?" Or were they, as some of their opponents contend, swayed by emotion and the appeal of dynamic personalities?

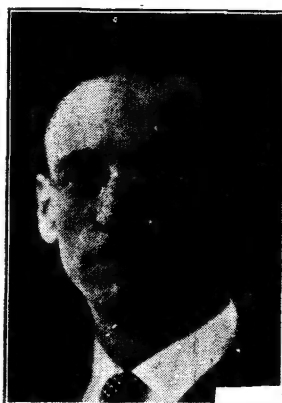
As usual in such cases there are statements of all kinds. Some of these are given elsewhere in this issue of *LABOR AGE*. They deal with practical problems of administration, with theories of workers' education and with matters of orientation in the labor movement. It is well known, however, that in statements issued on such occasions people build up a justification for positions taken and that the crucial question is not what manifestoes have been issued, which everyone may more or less interpret to suit himself. The real question is what motives have been at work, how the political forces have shaped up in the crisis.

## An Editorial Statement

### Right or Left?

When the recent developments at Brookwood are analyzed from that standpoint of dynamics, it appears to us only too evident that the students are correct in charging that Brookwood "has turned right."

To understand the exact nature of



A. J. MUSTE

the vote at Brookwood, it is necessary to bear in mind that in the Brookwood board the labor or trade union members cast ten votes, the faculty five, the student body two and the graduate body two. The trade union members can thus outvote all the other groups combined. In the case of the graduates only those who happen to be near New York can, as a general rule, get to the meeting of the corporation and vote.

Youth in the person of the students, large numbers of Brookwood's most active graduates, and the administrative staff at the school was outvoted at the Brookwood annual meeting. That does not sound like a turn to the left.

The rank and file, definitely working class elements as above named, were defeated by the votes of four trade union officials and four Brookwood teachers. That hardly constitutes a presumption for a turn to the left.

The Brookwood people who have been out in the field most, who have been in intimate touch with what is happening to the workers and farmers in America today were outvoted by persons who are more academic in

their approach and interests and certainly have not recently had such close contact with concrete developments in this swiftly changing American scene as Muste, Tippet, the students, such graduates as Larry Hogan, Eddie Ryan, Lore, Cope, Seacrist, Pierce, Kuhlman and many others.

The break at Brookwood was made possible primarily because a split developed in the Faculty which over a long period had shown a remarkable degree of unity and consequently efficiency. So long as the Faculty was fairly in agreement it was able to carry the trade union directors and most of the students and graduates along. It becomes necessary then to ask on what issue the Faculty split.

### Economic Determinism

The motive of economic security had considerable weight with the Saposs-Kennedy group, though not perhaps with every individual in it. Muste and Tippet were subjected to criticism on the ground that time and thought which they gave to raising funds for striking miners in West Virginia or for field work (in most cases by Brookwood graduates) meant less money for Brookwood. Muste and Tippet on their part believed that raising money for field workers willing to keep going where the labor struggle was hottest, was at least as important as raising funds to keep Brookwood instructors living in comparative comfort and security. It seems to be pretty generally admitted that but for the depression the break would not have come.

Considerable emphasis was also placed by the Saposs-Kennedy group on the contention that Muste's organizing activities, his prominent position in the CPLA, and the resulting tendency to identify Brookwood with a certain "political" position and with criticism of other groups alienated contributors. Whether this was actually the case and whether contributors to Brookwood will now come forward remains to be seen. But in any event the anxiety about contributors' opinions is a conservative or reactionary manifestation. The Muste-Tippet group's proposal: "Let us take our position first and then let our contributors make their decision," was the sound one from a revolutionary standpoint.

The emphasis of the Saposs-Ken-



A. J. MUSTE

nedy group was on preserving Brookwood as an institution until the economic storm had passed over. The Muste group opposed the institutionalizing of Brookwood and contended that it must not be thought of as an end in itself, that Brookwood must in this crisis be out among the workers in the active struggle, that in years to come when the workers asked, "What were you doing in the crisis of 1933?" Brookwood could not afford to answer that it had withdrawn from the struggle in order that it might be free to "serve" in calmer times.

### To Teach or to Act?

The Saposs-Kennedy group wins the most sympathy when it says to people: "After all, the business of a school is to teach, and not to organize workers and thus usurp the function of unions or political parties. It must give educational service, not presume to 'dictate' policy. In the present weak and desperately divided state of the American labor movement, is it not worth a lot of sacrifice and some compromise to keep one 'non-factional' school where students are admitted regardless of what wing of the movement they belong to and where the policies and activities of all groups are objectively presented? We simply do not want to make Brookwood solely an appendage of one admittedly small group, the CPLA. We want it to serve the entire labor movement."

This plausible tale loses its plausibility, however, when the following facts are taken into consideration. The Muste-Tippett group did not propose to put the school under the control of the N. E. C. of the CPLA. Not the slightest evidence was produced that the school discriminated against applicants on "political" grounds under the Muste regime. The only "discrimination" was that on which all faculty members had agreed, viz., against certain types of Communists who openly sought to destroy the school. Students of various political faiths were applying in larger numbers than ever.

No evidence was produced that the classroom work was not on a high plane and as "objective" as it could possibly be. No evidence was submitted that pressure was brought to bear on students to join the CPLA. Many students actually complained that it was easier to find out about the CPLA in the Bryn Mawr Summer School, for example, than in Brookwood! Furthermore, Brookwood was serving mass organizations all the time and not merely one "small group." The same is true of the CPLA.

### The CPLA Bogey Man

If, then, this had been the character of the school under the Muste regime including the period since the founding of the CPLA in 1929, why the sudden demand that the school be "disassociated from the CPLA"? Why not go on in the friendly relationship with the CPLA which had prevailed, since Brookwood took so large a part in founding that organization? Why should Brookwood abandon its position because that happened to be "the CPLA position?"

The answer is that while the CPLA more clearly defined its position and took a revolutionary stand, key people on the Brookwood faculty shifted suddenly to the right. D. J. Saposs was for years close to the Communist movement. That is no longer the case. He has suddenly become very friendly with the Socialist Party elements. He was once willing to endanger Brookwood's existence by being on the Faculty of C. P. schools (and Muste raised no objection to that); he is now willing to precipitate a conflict at Brookwood and endanger its existence in his anxiety to conciliate S. P. elements. Muste's persistent warning against these social-democratic attitudes and tactics which have opened the way for Hitlerism in Germany is now condemned as making Brookwood a partisan school.

Brookwood students used to think that J. C. Kennedy carried a C. P. card in his pocket. He too is now anxious to conciliate the S. P. Whenever the key members of the Brookwood faculty gave specific instances to back their charge that Muste was "isolating" Brookwood, making it the "seminary of a sect," they dragged out some criticism of Muste's against social-democracy—never any criticism of the C. P., for example!

The faculty members at Brookwood actually went so far as to drag out a letter of Muste's giving an analysis of the S. P. from a revolutionary standpoint, such as Muste, Kennedy and others have given a hundred times, and to say that "even if such a letter was not written on official Brookwood stationery" it illustrated the "complications" in which a "non-factional" school got involved with various groups when the director had a clearly defined position and expressed it in controversial matters. In other words, the Brookwood faculty must be people who express themselves only on things that happened in the labor movement 50 years ago or about which nobody feels deeply! The Muste-Tippett group were right in as-

serting that that kind of "non-factionalism" would "make Brookwood the seminary of a sect, a sect of male and female young ladies!"

### "We Must Not Take Sides"

With such an attitude built up in the faculty it is no wonder that they finally accepted meekly, without changing so much as a comma, a document written by the trade union directors the whole emphasis of which was on the contention that the work of Muste and others in independent or "dual" unions such as the P.M.A., with "oppositions" against autocracy and racketeering, meant "injecting the school into internal trade union disputes," incurred the hostility of "the labor movement," and so must be given up by any one prominently connected with Brookwood! These same faculty members sat through hours of discussion without raising one word of protest against such sentiments uttered by trade union directors whose votes they needed in this controversy. These faculty members and not the trade union directors played an unworthy and servile role. Yes, regardless of their protests, regardless of what any individual in that group may hold as an individual, they turned right! The road they took leads back to Green and even Woll!

As for the trade union directors as a group, they took the position that personally honest, more or less progressive but non-militant trade unionists, would naturally take. They want a school which is strictly an auxiliary to the unions and not an active force upon the labor movement. The latter means, as they see it, "dictating" to the unions. They want to remain on good terms with all except outright racketeering elements in the unions and do not want to be identified clearly with rank-and-file opposition movements. They have gotten past their crusading days. Their main desire now is to conserve something out of the wreck rather than to march out boldly to meet a new situation. They had a perfect right to their opinion. But nobody can contend that they were in any sense leading Brookwood to the left or hope that they are going to do so. They cannot.

In view of all this, the plea for "unity" made by certain elements during the controversy is shown to be misleading and dangerous. Compromise on essential principles never brings unity. The right-wingers at Brookwood smashed a situation in which by general admission a remarkable degree

of unity had existed for years. An army moving unitedly in the wrong direction cannot arrive at the right goal.

### Brookwood's Future

What does the future hold for Brookwood? There are just a few real alternatives. With the loss of vital elements, the school may just not be able to weather the economic storm. If it does survive, the trade union directors may take active charge and see to it that the school is for all practical purposes a tool of the cautious, mildly progressive wing of the trade unions. Unless conditions change greatly, this element does not constitute a permanent and dependable base. It could not keep the Workers Education Bureau or its affiliated enterprises going.

Another possibility is that certain S.P. elements may furnish support. That certainly will not mean that

Brookwood is more "non-factional" than under the Muste regime, nor will it remove the necessity of Brookwood's making up its mind where it stands.

Still another possibility is that Brookwood may become a replica of the Bryn Mawr or Barnard Summer School, a school in the academic sense (which of course does not preclude using progressive educational methods). It is possible that in the stage of development which follows the present world-chaos there may be a place for such a school in the U. S. But such a school is expensive. It will be very different from the Brookwood that has been. As soon as it goes into the field and exerts any real influence on the labor movement, it will be up against all the problems Brookwood met. It will be dependent on liberal support, and will have to cater to it as Brookwood in the past always resolutely refused to do.

Finally, Brookwood might experi-

ence a revolution and realize that with its genuinely militant and vigorous elements out it cannot survive. (The gestures of cordiality toward the Communist Party graduates of Brookwood now being made by Saposs and Kennedy in a weak attempt to show that they have not gone "right" will get them nothing but headaches. The C.P. will not support Brookwood. It will ruin or capture). Brookwood may turn again toward the genuinely militant elements who are now forced to disown it. The possibility now seems remote. Only on that condition, however, can Brookwood become again the distinctive force which it has been in the American labor scene—the school which according to the very Board of Directors which tried to make out that Muste was ruining Brookwood and to dictate ignominious terms to him and his group was "still the outstanding workers educational institution in this country."

## The Statement of Purpose Which Brookwood Repudiated

**B**ROOKWOOD is a workers' educational institution. It regards itself as an integral part of the American and international labor movement. In such a desperate crisis as now confronts the working masses throughout the world, with Fascism everywhere save in Soviet Russia marching ruthlessly onward, it is essential for any institution taking part in the labor struggle to be clear as to its philosophy and purpose. Vagueness in purpose or lack of vigor in action are dangerous. Therefore Brookwood finds it necessary at this time to restate clearly its position in the labor movement.

The aim of a labor movement representing the exploited and oppressed in the present stage of world history must necessarily be a revolutionary one—the overthrow of the exploiters, the abolition of the system under which some work and have not while others have and work not, the establishment of a workers' republic and a planned economic system operated in the interests of the masses and not of the few.

These ends can be secured only by building up the organized power of the working class, by developing an effective labor and farmer movement in all its phases,—economic, political, cooperative and educational.

It is of increasing importance as the labor struggle grows sharper that there should develop along with mass organizations and movements an effective left-wing vanguard, an inspiring

*Suggested by A. J. Muste, Tom Tippet, Lucile Kohn, Cara Cook and Cal Bellaver, at the request of the Brookwood Policy Committee, in March, 1933, and subsequently presented by these five to the Board of Directors. It was rejected by the Board as a statement of Brookwood's policy for the ensuing year, and a statement was adopted by the Board which the above group could not accept, and so resigned from their respective positions at Brookwood, at the annual Meeting of the Corporation, March 5, 1933.*

rallying center for the active, militant workers. These active, devoted, militant spirits must be effectively organized to give unity, coordination, leadership and inspiration to the masses and to mass organizations.

One of the chief aims of a labor college must be to train such active spirits for their work. Experience has shown us that the graduates, both of our resident and of extension classes, are condemned to inactivity or to confused and ineffective activity if they merely receive information and education in an academic sense and are then set adrift. They need the guidance and the help on the job which come from functioning in a vanguard organization, that focuses their efforts and coordinates them with those of other workers in other fields.

We desire to help in every possible way in the development of such a realistic, revolutionary vanguard organization which is greatly needed in America today, and which is free from dangerous reformist tendencies.

In the present deepening crisis, Brookwood must be closely linked with its graduates in the field. Its educational work should be related as closely as possible to actual struggles of the workers and farmers, employed and unemployed. It cannot always draw a fine line between "educational" and "organizational" work. It cannot purvey "neutral" education in trade union situations, for example, where racketeering, corruption or autocracy are involved. It must "take sides"—with the workers against collaborationist leadership where it is found, and with all elements fighting for a progressive and militant industrial unionism.

Though Brookwood is not organizationally under the control of any party or group, we have deemed it essential in this period in labor history to make our position clear. Otherwise an institution may drift anywhere. Revolutionary drive and vigor must not be sacrificed for a negative, largely academic ideal of "non-partisanship." We have a position of our own and we believe that we render service and not injury to the labor movement when we stand by that position and defend it.

We hold, however, to the importance of bringing about unity so far as possible among all genuinely militant



# "Brookwood Turned Right, and We Left"

**W**E are convinced that Brookwood has decided to abandon the kind of labor education that has made it a dynamic force in the American labor movement. The action taken by the Brookwood corporation at its annual meeting on March 5, clearly shows that it is no longer to be guided by the needs of the working class today. Brookwood is no longer to serve unreservedly those groups which seek its aid in working for a new social order. Brookwood has taken the fatal step which makes it an end in itself; in order to play "safe" Brookwood is to retrench, is to cease antagonizing conservative elements within the movement such as the A. F. of L., right factions within unions and racketeers.

We quote from the report on the new policy adopted for Brookwood, in order to prove our contention in their own words: "Brookwood's usefulness is impaired when it injects itself into factional union quarrels, inevitable though they be or when it in-

elements, of united action of all labor forces in economic struggles, and of a unified mass labor party in which all working-class elements opposed to the old parties and looking to a socialized economic order may be united.

We recognize also that conditions and forces in the labor movement change,—sometimes with great rapidity, and that an institution in order to live must adapt itself to these changes. In seeking more sharply to define its policy, Brookwood is concerned not about words, but about the idea of a realistic, revolutionary labor movement and the most effective embodiment of that idea in action.

In the very nature of the case a sound left-wing institution must seek contact with the workers everywhere and with their organizations. Brookwood will, therefore, continue to serve all progressive and radical elements which genuinely seek its cooperation.

Our general educational policy will continue to be what it has been—encouraging full, free, critical discussion of all problems confronting the labor movement, presentation of all points of view, including viewpoints of various tendencies and parties in the movement, and encouraging in the students a realistic attitude toward facts.

Brookwood then, in the words of the statement adopted by the annual meeting of 1929, "sets itself a particular kind of educational task, in order

*Statement of the majority of the student body of Brookwood Labor College with regard to action taken at the meeting of the Corporation on March 5, 1933.*

jects itself into organizational activity which is properly a function of a labor union rather than of an educational institution."

We, as worker-students, believe that workers' education cannot survive unless it remains undiluted and unless it continues to identify itself in the class struggle with the radical elements in the movement. We are not interested in academic workers' education, nor in educators who are careful to avoid becoming involved in organizational work, and who therefore live above the workers' battle.

The field work which has made Brookwood, and which in the past determined its philosophy and activity is attacked in several ways. It was demanded that Brookwood's director re-

to advance a particular kind of labor movement. The members of the staff should be chosen for their intelligence, enthusiasm and ability to take part in such a task."

We want militant, radical workers, young people with vision and enthusiasm to come to Brookwood, as well as more conservative trade unionists, who are willing to study and analyze in an open-minded fashion the problems of life and of the labor movement in the modern world. We do not wish to depart from our former policy of not discriminating against individual applicants otherwise qualified on the ground of race or on the ground of political, religious, social or economic views or affiliations. Prospective students should, however, know where in the labor movement Brookwood stands and the kind of training it affords, and should be judged primarily by their desire for such training and their ability to profit by it.

In order that there may be no mistake on the point, we assert again that although we believe Brookwood must have its own position in the labor movement, we propose that it should be governed as before by its own Board of Directors, and that we do not propose that Brookwood be placed under the control of the National Executive Committee of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action or any other outside body or group.

sign from the chairmanship and from the national executive committee of the CPLA. Field work projects which Brookwood's extension director organized have been compared to half-way measures, and thus condemned. We consider the suggestion that the function of Brookwood is to do purely educational work in the strict meaning of the word educational, is an indication that Brookwood has isolated itself from the active struggle of the workers.

The charge made by A. J. Muste that the majority of the faculty are becoming conservative has been answered with an attempt to show that A. J. Muste was trying to subordinate Brookwood to the CPLA. We consider that to be an over-simplification of the issue, and untrue for several reasons.

A. J. Muste, upon whom falls the financial responsibility for Brookwood, is active in the movement through the CPLA and elsewhere. Therefore he does not spend his full time raising the Brookwood budget (including salaries). Security for the institution and for individuals is a large factor in the controversy, and proves the issue to be one of "right" or "left." We point out that a choice to the "right" has been made now in the midst of the present crisis.

We are satisfied that, as Tom Tippet has said, that choice would have been made whether the CPLA existed or not, if A. J. Muste and Tom Tippet had pursued their militant policy in unions, among the unemployed, and other organizations.

We think that the connection that has existed up until now between Brookwood and the CPLA was a legitimate one, because of the leadership of A. J. Muste in both organizations, and because of the reason for the formation of the CPLA. At that time the Brookwood faculty thought there was no existing medium through which Brookwood philosophy and policy could function.

During the whole controversy we have supported the position of A. J. Muste and Tom Tippet because we believe in their kind of workers' education. We consider them the most successful teachers at Brookwood precisely because of their continuous contact with the field.

We were faced with the choice of retract and compromise, or leave Brookwood. We, as militants, could not compromise against the stand we have taken, and left.

# More About the Philadelphia U. C. L.

**T**HE December-January issue of *LABOR AGE* contained an article by Edmund F. Ryan Jr., entitled "The Philadelphia Unemployed Citizens League Carries On." The article was submitted for publication by the Philadelphia branch of the CPLA. The publication of that article has caused a considerable amount of discussion. Lengthy comment upon it has been submitted to us by Franz Daniel, former organizer of the Socialist Party in Philadelphia and active in the League. Since the split described by Ryan in his article, Daniel has remained with the so-called Stella Avenue U.C.L.

We regret that consideration of space compel us to omit much of the detail in Daniel's reply. We, however, quote exactly his important points, following each point with our own editorial comment. Daniel states:

"The organization of the Unemployed Citizens' League of Philadelphia which took place in June, 1932, had been preceded by a month's hard work on the part of three men: Edward Gentzsch, a hosiery knitter, Andrew Vance, a carpet weaver, and myself, at the time the Socialist Party organizer in Philadelphia. This group had done all of the preliminary work of securing a headquarters, of visiting in the neighborhood and securing the cooperation of a small but trustworthy group of unemployed workers, of collecting information as to the organization and conduct of similar organizations in other localities, and of deciding on fundamental policies. . . .

"From the beginning the Socialist Party of Philadelphia respected the League's principle of independent growth, and there is not the slightest bit of evidence which points to any attempt made to influence or control any aspect of the League's work. To the contrary, the highly efficient socialist legal committee was instructed by the Local to offer its services to the League, and all of the League's legal work was assumed by this group of socialist lawyers without once asking for or receiving recognition. . . . Any charge that the S. P. desired to form committees or to carry out a socialist political or organizational program does not have a shred of supporting proof and must be put down

## by The Editors

as the pitiful product of a prejudiced imagination.

"One is indeed grateful to Ryan Jr., for his frank admission of the role played by the CPLA in League affairs. That from the beginning it used a bloc tactic and accepted without question the underlying philosophy of such a tactic, the philosophy of minority control, does not have to be proved by the present writer. It is needful for only one or two omissions and errors to be pointed out. In the first place Ryan does not recall that the invitation he received to participate in the organization of the League was conditioned by a denial of bloc tactics. Secondly, he omits mention of the disinterested service to the League given by Edward Gentzsch and John Godber, both CPLA members."

On the point of who contributed to the effective launching of the U.C.L. of Philadelphia, we may quote John Godber, to whom Daniel refers in complimentary terms. Speaking of a meeting at his home in the early stages of the formation of the League, Godber says that there were "present among others, Louis Budenz (executive secretary of the CPLA), Edward Gentzsch, Edmund Ryan, Pat Young, and a member of the I. W. W. None of the local people had any idea as to what should be done or where to begin—Budenz suggested that Gentzsch call a meeting of his contacts, at which all of us would try to be present."

Godber goes on to say that the constitution adopted by the League a little later "proved to be almost exactly the same as the constitution of the Seattle organization, which had appeared in the June issue of *LABOR AGE*. To be perfectly fair to all concerned, it should be mentioned that Daniel was at this time extremely busy with the presidential campaign in Philadelphia and could not devote his time to the League as he would like to do. To Ryan must be given credit for being instrumental in securing the funds which enabled the League early in July to stage a hunger march to Harrisburg. I. L. Weinberg, who had come into the League about this time and who later proved to be the 'sore spot' around which all the trouble centered, was largely responsible for some of the agitation carried on to put this hunger march across."

We do not consider it a black mark against the CPLA that its members in the U.C.L. acted in an organized manner. The important point is that if they were in a "Bloc" it was with the rank and file of the membership and not with reactionary trade union officials and Republican party henchmen. For radicals to act in a responsible and organized manner is no crime. The question is whether they kept close to the masses and acted in their interest. Daniel himself speaks of his small group "deciding on fundamental policies" in advance.

"Again our author describes his organization as 'the guiding spirit from the start . . . and the only element in it who had any definite ideas as to the future of the organization.' The author of the above words conveniently forgets that within a few days after the League's organization he became so angry over a trifle that he withdrew himself and his entire family from the League. The League was left to struggle along several weeks without the benefit of the guiding spirits of the guiding spirit."

We understand that Ryan resigned from the executive committee and took his place again with the rank and file of the organization when he became convinced that the tactics employed by the executive committee, such as a ruling that no E. C. member should speak against any actions of the majority of the E. C. on the floor of the membership meeting would compromise his position as a militant with the rank and file.

"From its organization in June the League had made steady progress until late in the summer. Its membership had jumped into the thousands and it was looked upon in Philadelphia as the first mass organization of the unemployed that had been accomplished."

We think this admission on the part of Daniel that the organization launched under the auspices above indicated was highly successful, is an important one.

"Trouble appeared late in August. Without exception this trouble centered around the activity and personality of I. L. Weinberg who had come into the League early in August. Weinberg, one of those all too common products of the labor movement, a man of ability and initiative, but who makes the fatal

mistake of assuming that the development of labor organization coincides with his material well being, had, twelve years previously, been repudiated by the labor movement in Philadelphia and was still under a serious cloud as a result of his work in Pottstown and Baltimore. . . . Very soon after Weinberg became active in the League we found that little or no work was being done for the simple reason that the committees were splitting into pro and anti-Weinberg factions. He (Weinberg) would pay absolutely no attention to the expressed wishes of the executive board in the matter of the type of speeches he was making, and at one time he went so far as to involve the League in a law suit of a serious nature without so much as a word to, let alone authorization from, the League itself. . . ."

We are not interested in making a wholesale apology for Weinberg in all of his actions. We find, however, that it is generally admitted that Weinberg was the first to mount a soap box in Philadelphia, gather the masses of the workers together and prevent constables from carrying through an eviction. If his speeches were sometimes a bit rash, that is a failing which may be excused, in view of the fact that there is such a deplorable lack of militancy in the labor movement. We understand that the "law suit" to which Daniel refers, had to do with the arrest of a constable seeking to carry out an eviction. It seems quite possible that Weinberg was justified in not postponing action until he could get "authorization from the League itself." We understand also that Daniel, etc., followed up the case against this constable and that he was later removed from office.

(Daniel then comes to the election which brought on a crisis in the League.)

"Weinberg and William Skillin, the mainspring of the all-important relief committee, were named for the office of president. Ryan Jr., and I were nominated for the vice presidency. At the meeting of the executive committee following the nominations Weinberg, by a vote of nine to three, was asked to withdraw as a candidate. This action came as a result of two things: first, as has been shown, Weinberg was incapable of working with an organization, and, second, Weinberg's candidacy would result in a split of the League. That the League would split as a result of the election was

a foregone conclusion. The active members of every committee had already served notice to that effect. Our trucks, truck crews, headquarters, equipment would be lost. In short this election would be the end of the League. Weinberg refused to withdraw."

Daniel's statement seems to imply that Weinberg would be elected and that this would mean a split. This implies that Weinberg had the support of the rank and file, a fact which is perhaps explained by his militant activities. Why then should a part of the E. C. decide in advance not to abide by the results of the election?

"On the basis of proof which I had that day received, I brought charges against Weinberg which, if proved, would render him unfit to hold a responsible position in any labor organization. Weinberg was suspended and the election for president was postponed until such time as he would be cleared or found guilty. . . ."

Daniel presents his version of the way in which Weinberg was exonerated of the charges made against him, but fails to mention the fact that the impartial arbitrator, Mr. Hugh F. Munro, a well known liberal in Philadelphia, ruled that while Weinberg might have been guilty of bad judgment in certain instances, he should be reinstated "to membership with all the rights and privileges of any official position which he may have held at the time he was suspended." Ryan holds a signed statement from Munro to this effect. In the first instance, Mr. Munro had ruled that certain charges against Weinberg were sustained, but he reversed his position on the basis of new evidence presented.

Daniel does not mention the fact that he himself had been instrumental in having elected to membership in the League a notorious professional strike breaker, Frank Wilson, who because of his strike breaking activities cannot be a member of the Hosiery Workers' Union, but who was employed on the Union Labor Record in Philadelphia, a paper to which Daniel refers in complimentary terms. If Wilson was to be admitted to the League, and his strike breaking forgotten, there seems to be much stronger reason for forgetting the comparatively minor charges made against Weinberg who, with all his alleged faults, had unquestionably carried on vigorous and militant activities for the unemployed.

"Nominations were again opened for president and the same candi-

dates were named. The election was set for one week after nominations, but the CPLA unit, flushed with Weinberg's triumph, tried to force the election at an irregular meeting held four days after the nominations. The majority of those present at this meeting refused to be stampeded into an irregular election with the result that Weinberg and a group of eighty—carefully picked from the several hundred present—departed to the home of one of their number and elected Weinberg president by an unanimous vote. A few days later the relief committee of the U. C. L. caught Weinberg red-handed, using a credential issued by the League and never turned in by him, soliciting relief supplies in the League's name. Naturally he was punched, and in a grand exhibition of class solidarity—slightly damaged by a black eye—Weinberg had five members of the League locked up. One is still waiting a hearing by the grand jurv."

We are informed that the executive committee regarded itself as superior to the membership meeting and refused to abide by decisions of the membership in regard to the date for the election. Ryan in his reply has described how by the action of the U. T. W. officials, such as Kelly and Steiner, the hall was closed to the members on the night in question. As for Weinberg being caught "a few days later" using a credential "issued by the League and never turned in by him," as Ryan explained in his article, the rank and file who carried through the election after being ejected from their meeting place, regarded themselves as the legitimate organization. Naturally Weinberg and others were not going to allow the organization to be disorganized by suspending the collection of relief. The beating administered to Weinberg inevitably reminds one of the tactics which autocratic and racketeering elements in the unions constantly use against the membership and especially against militant opposition elements.

At no point, it seems to us, does Daniel meet the charge that he, the leader of the S.P. in Philadelphia, was working in the closest co-operation with the most conservative union officials, prominent in Republican party politics, who have a reputation for blocking militant efforts of the workers and who to all appearances wanted to make the League function as a relief organization, pure and simple.

# Los Angeles Unemployed Look To Government

**T**HE Unemployed Co-operative Relief Association organization in Los Angeles, County, California, had its beginning about a year ago. Until recently its whole activity revolved around the two elementary principles that brought it forth, "chiseling, and the exchange of casual labor for vegetables and fruit." The movement started in a small town surrounded with orchards and truck gardens teeming with fruit and vegetables going to waste; it being unprofitable for the rancher (or farmer) to hire labor to gather it up, and transport it to market.

The idea spread quickly and soon groups sprung up everywhere in the county. Some socially minded people got into the movement and gave the isolated groups a semblance of organization. A delegate body, called the County Council, was formed. To this Council each group sends three delegates to the weekly meeting.

At first the council meetings were void of real function. The council had no real purpose to serve. Each unit "chiseled" as well as it could, and thought only of its own needs. The force of circumstances, however, again impelled rational collective action. Some units at times obtained an overabundance of certain vegetables, say onions, while other units had loads of potatoes and no onions. Exchange of produce between the individual units was the result. This exchange went on haphazardly for sometime, till the idea of a central exchange place dawned upon the unemployed, and a central warehouse came into existence. This central warehouse had to be administered, and a manager was appointed by the County Council.

## Movement Grows

These selfhelp organizations were by this time half feeding a lot of people, were gaining prestige in the community and growing fast. At a given period the work of hauling vegetables in from the country was seriously hampered by lack of transportation, especially gasoline. Presentation of this need was made to the county supervisors and the supervisors allotted a certain amount of gasoline regularly per unit. Every gallon of gas dispensed for this purpose has to be minutely accounted for to the authorities.

For some months the units went along in this fashion, some more fortunate than others in the general

by R. A.

"chiseling." Eventually, however, the winter period came on and vegetables and fruit were not so abundant, and besides, a diet of carrots and parsnips and parsnips and carrots gets a bit tiresome, don't you know.

## "What Is Wrong With Us"

Again circumstances forced ideas upon the unemployed. Staples could not be chiseled to any extent; something had to be done. "Now," thought the unemployed, "we are American citizens, loyal, orderly, patriotic. True the government does not owe every citizen a living, but there are so many of us, and we are real citizens, American born and bred." There were indeed a great many of them by this time. Approximately 150,000 unemployed were registered in the many units throughout Los Angeles County. Over two-thirds of this number are collectively organized through the County Council.

The situation was presented to the Los Angeles City Council. After a great deal of delay the city fathers voted an appropriation. The munificent sum of \$6,000 was set aside for the purchase of staples to be distributed to the unemployed units. The unemployed were given the privilege of determining what staples the purchasing agent (appointed by them) was to buy.

Generally the unemployed felt grateful for the donation. The government powers were after all interested, benevolently interested, in the common people. The food administrator for this district, Colonel Wyman, appointed by Governor Rolph, some ten months ago had informed the leaders of the unemployed that he was the good shepherd that would provide for the unfortunate ones in the community. The unemployed should repose full confidence in him. He would help them; he would help their movement. And they did repose full confidence with him, and thought little of the necessity of relying upon their own collective strength.

## Learning Fast

But two weeks ago the County Council of the unemployed organizations unanimously passed a resolution demanding the removal of the colonel. It seems that this government agent has been working to disrupt the or-

ganization of the unemployed. Somebody doesn't like this movement. The conservative leadership of the Council have a feeling that the politicians don't cherish their organization. Of course it is only this particular set of politicians that are, or may be, bucking the movement. Another set of officials would be friendly. They do not yet seem to realize that it is not a matter of this set or that set of politicians, but of something beyond personalities. But the unemployed are learning, learning faster than at any time in their lives.

Now comes the Citizens Committee composed of leading business and professional people. These citizens have come forth to help the unemployed. The active spirits of the County Council have had a couple of sessions with them. I was present as an observer at the last session held in the Chamber of Commerce Building.

At this session Mr. Joe Scott was present. Mr. Scott is Chairman of the County Community Chest and a big cog in the state Republican machine. There was also a judge and other such present. The unemployed voiced their grievances against Colonel Wyman, the red tape brigade in the Red Cross flour department, etc. A man who said he was a radical described the horrible misery among the people of his branch Unit 14, and intimated to the comfortable citizens that unless they saw to it that something substantial was done for the unemployed there might be another Seattle situation in Los Angeles. Other speakers pointed out the difficulties in their units. The manager of the Pasadena units recounted with pride, and many thanks to Providence the splendid work the units have done in Pasadena, the splendid co-operation the leading citizens have lent, and amid another effusion of thanks to Divine Providence announced that some 80 families in his region of Pasadena had recently been served with eviction notices. He declared he knew not what to do about that, and sat down.

## The Substantial Citizens Speak

After a while the substantial citizens spoke. Mr. Scott, the big personality of the evening, told of the Irish strain in him, and of having carried a hod in New York City years



ago. He called for loyalty and faith. He reminded the unemployed that this was America—as though it could be any other place with a lawyer politician on the floor speaking of the Irish in him, and of the hod.

There is a Colonel in the Citizens Committee, Colonel Fowler. The Colonel spoke fervently of his desire to help the unemployed. Mr. Sylvester, a conservative unemployed worker, interrupted to object. Mr. Sylvester (wary of Colonels perhaps) raised the point that the unemployed insist on running their own affairs. It took several assurances on the part of the Colonel that the Citizens Committee means not at all to interfere in the functions of the unemployed organization to leave Mr. Sylvester dissatisfied. The suspicious cuss.

The Citizens' Committee will do a number of things for the unemployed. They will expedite the issuing of Red Cross Flour to the individual unemployed, may get some surplus bread from the bakeries, and do other things. There will be other sessions between the County Council officers and the Citizens' Committee.

But the unemployed are learning. The question is are they learning enough and fast enough? The rank and file in larger numbers daily are realizing that they must depend upon

their organized collective power to get proper treatment and consideration. They are many, they have a community of interest. They have a feeling of distrust for the suave business leaders. They would rather go it alone by their hungry selfs and work out their salvation. They are sick of carrots and turnips and skimmed milk. Some are skeptical of government. Where has the government been all these depression years? And whose government is it anyway?

### A Limit to Chiseling

But the "force of things" is working. There is a limit to self help. Chiseling is limited, staples are unobtainable by chiseling. People must have a roof over their heads even in California, and they must have light and gas. You can't chisel gas and light from the Edison Company. You can't build homes the same as one may gather onions. The County Council, the unemployed organizations, a non-political set up (political subjects are barred) has had to enter the political arena.

The Council has adopted a petition. It is petitioning and demanding of the State Legislature, the County Supervisors, and the City Council a number of things, unaware of the implication of its demands.

The petition, "petitions and demands," a moratorium against evictions and foreclosures; water, heat, light and shelter for all the people now needing these things; and aid in the form of land, equipment and material for the use of such organized groups of unemployed citizens, as are able and willing to use their labor without cash compensation, in the production of necessities for the relief of the present extreme crises.

The petition demands precedence over all matters before the governing bodies, "for the very obvious reason that hunger, disease and death do not wait."

It is needless to say that this petition won't get to first base, unless the unemployed organize into a state wide compact body, and do more than petition. But the force of circumstances is working, and with some intelligent guidance the unemployed here will come to organize and act as real red blooded American citizens, and not as whimpering beggars.

This unemployed movement that started as other similar movements elsewhere, collecting wasting food-stuffs, is learning fundamental lessons out of its daily struggle for mere existence, and is looking straight at government.

## Soaking the Schools

by Maurice Goldbloom

FREE public education in America is the result of a century of struggle by labor. Today it is threatened by the hysteria of economy, which, fostered by the deepening crisis of capitalism, is sweeping the country. Increases in the size of classes, cuts in teachers' salaries, closing of evening schools, fees for summer courses—these are only an opening wedge for the drastic curtailment and perhaps the eventual abolition of free education.

The depression brought with it a considerable loss of revenue to all governments—local, state, and national. This resulted in deficits which could be met in two ways, either by raising taxes on those who could pay and finding new sources of revenue, or by reducing expenses. While the depression reduced the yield of certain forms of taxes and left fewer people able to pay, it left many forms of wealth practically untouched.

In New York City, as Dr. Abraham Lefkowitz has pointed out, in his study

of "Teachers and the Economic Situation," there are many sources of revenue which have not as yet been tapped, and which would draw on those who can still well afford to pay. Among these are assessment to their full value of the properties of the banks, department stores, and public utility corporations; the financing of new subways by assessments on the properties directly benefited; and securing for the public the profits now given away to favored corporations through the bestowal of public utility franchises for far less than they are worth.

### Schools or Graft?

There are also many places where legitimate economies could be made. The huge waste of overpayment by the city for land bought in condemnation proceedings, sometimes for as much as 290 times its assessed value,

could be eliminated, saving millions of dollars every year. Tammany leaders holding highly paid jobs, whose duties are performed by their subordinates, could be separated from the payroll with not only a saving for the city, but an actual improvement in its government. And if these measures should prove insufficient, then the bankers, on whose shoulders much of the blame for the depression lies, should take a cut in the interest which they receive on city securities.

Such methods of increasing revenue and decreasing expenditure would be thoroughly satisfactory to the great majority of the voters, and would make it possible to avoid reducing the pay of underpaid teachers and civil service workers, whose salaries lagged far behind prices during the days of prosperity. What is more, they would leave larger sums available for unemployment relief and for creating increased opportunities for education. But the tiny fraction of the nation who possess the greater part of its

wealth are not anxious to part with any of it, either in the form of increased taxes or through the loss of any of the forms of graft which they enjoy at the expense of the government. Moreover, they seek to reduce the wages of teachers and civil service employes in order to make it easier to reduce the wages of workers in private industry.

### Our Real Rulers Come Forth

Finding that public officials, usually responsive to their slightest wishes, no longer dare to take the responsibility for cutting the wages of civil service employes and stifling education, the monied classes of America have found themselves forced to reveal themselves as our real rulers.

In New York we have had one of the flagrant examples of this condition. Although, as has been pointed out above, the city of New York has many sources of revenue as yet untouched, and although its debt is well within the very conservative limit set by the state constitution (10 per cent of the assessed valuation of all taxable real estate in the city) the bankers and banker-controlled press began, about the beginning of 1932, to set up a great clamor for municipal economy. In response, Jimmy Walker, facing removal as Mayor for various crimes and misdemeanors, demanded last summer that all city employes accept a "voluntary" reduction in pay, in order to reduce the budget. Before anything could come of Mr. Walker's attempt to persuade the city employes to submit peacefully to having their pockets picked, he made his rather undignified exit from the scene and was succeeded by "Holy Joe" McKee.

The latter, whose belief in honest and economical government was as zealous as it was recent, renewed the request of his predecessor that the city workers accept a voluntary cut of 8 1/3 per cent in their salaries. In spite of vigorous efforts by city officials to "persuade" the civil service employes to swallow the cut, the latter, following the lead of the Teachers' Union and the Uniformed Firemen's Association (an A. F. of L. union in which the great mass of the firemen are organized), overwhelmingly rejected the idea.

### Our "Distinguished Citizens"

The refusal of the city employes to be bulldozed into yielding peacefully to a pay-cut forced the bankers to carry their fight to the state legislature, since the salaries of police, firemen and teachers were protected by

state law. For this, however, they were prepared. Under their inspiration and leadership, a group of distinguished citizens—distinguished by the amount of loot they had managed to accumulate—had set themselves up as the Citizens' Budget Commission, which, pretending to the purest and most disinterested concern for the preservation of the city's credit, actually consists of representatives of all the leading financial institutions, real estate concerns, and public utility corporations in New York. The function of this committee has been to create a sentiment in favor of pay-cuts and other forms of retrenchment in the public service, by means of an unscrupulous campaign of falsification and misrepresentation.

Meanwhile the bankers themselves brought unconcealed pressure to bear on the city by refusing to purchase its securities unless it obeyed their orders in regard to "economies." This they did on the pretext that the credit of the city must be restored in order that they might sell its securities to the public. They dared to say this in the face of the fact that one bank alone—the National City—had in it enough cash to more than meet the entire short term credit needs of the city at the time, without obtaining a single additional dollar from the public, and in spite of the fact that city securities furnished one of the few safe investments still open to the banks. For, in back of New York City's bonds there stands the right to levy unlimited taxes on all property within the city. Thus city bonds are actually an obligation prior to the mortgages in which the banks have placed so large a part of their funds. If city bonds are not worth 100 cents on the dollar, then it would seem that these mortgages are absolutely worthless. Similarly, the railroad bonds which loom so large in the portfolios of most banks (and are

usually carried on their books at par) are selling at an average of less than 50 cents on the dollar, yet the banks, which continue to extend credit to the railroads, dare to threaten the city with its refusal. Finally, nothing can surpass the gall of Charles Mitchell of the National City Bank, which sunk \$30,000,000 without trace in Cuban sugar, and which, in 1929, lent its officers without security \$2,000,000, only 5 per cent of which has ever been repaid, in claiming that his bank could not handle city securities because, in the absence of "economies," they were not safe.

### Education and Bourgeois Democracy

Yet, in spite of the obvious hypocrisy which has marked their every move, the bankers and real estate interests have been able, by lies and misrepresentations, obediently publicized by their kept press, and by the unblushing use of their financial power to browbeat legislatures, not only in New York, but all over the country, into slashing salaries and restricting government services, especially in respect to education. To so great an extent is this true, that a survey of 38 countries, made by the United States Bureau of Education, showed that the schools of this country had suffered more than those of almost any other.

When, as has occurred in New York, legislation prepared by a committee of bankers is passed by a legislature known to be hostile, and signed by a governor who has previously begged the bankers, in vain, to permit some changes, representative government in America is clearly dead. Only the workers of America can resist the dictatorship of the bankers, and it is on the workers who were responsible for their creation that the public schools must depend for their preservation.

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# Techno-Crazy—That's Capitalism!

by Justus Ebert

**C**APITALISM is in an awful jam. By way of the machine it aims to operate industry at a profit, without men and with increasingly more productivity and less purchasing power among the masses of the people. By means of automatic mechanism it is increasing production, displacing workers, and depriving ever growing numbers of the ability to buy. When Technocracy shouts "Look out; you're heading for a smash," Capitalism retorts, "Aw, shet up; you're nutty." Then it goes on its perverse way to introduce more machines, displace more workers, destroy more purchasing power, while turning out more output.

Just how Techno-crazy capitalism has grown may be judged from the fact that this country now has 1,700 industrial research laboratories as compared with only 200 ten years ago. With almost a nine-fold increase in labor-displacing machine-inventing establishments in ten years, it looks as though there will also be a nine-fold increase in unemployment in ten years.

Of course capitalism denies that it desires a workerless industry. The February 1929 *Magazine of Business* though, will shed some enlightenment on that point. It contains an article entitled, "We Build a Plant to Run Without Men." It tells of the A. O. Smith Corporation of Milwaukee, a builder of automobile bodies, whole sections of whose mammoth \$8,000,000 plant operate automatically, without any workers at all, and where 10,000 automobile chassis frames a day are turned out by only 208 employees, one-tenth of the previous number. The Smith Corporation engineers have set a completely mechanized, workerless industry as their goal. So have many another of the 17,000 industrial research laboratories already referred to. And so have many more industries, like the electric power and the aluminum industries, wherein sub-stations and distant plants are operated from a central directing point with only a few employees!

All this notwithstanding, capitalist apologists insist in denying that it is trying to operate industry without workers. They declare, without the least betrayal of humor, that capitalism only displaces labor in order to enlarge employment opportunities. In pursuit of this philanthropic end, it sets about devising new machines, new needs, and new industries. One wonders, in this

connection, what of old machines, old needs, and old industries? With so much machinery already in disuse, with so many needs already unprovided for, and so many industries already partly or wholly shut down, depriving 15 millions of employment and a livelihood, "new machines, new needs, new industries" look like another one of those delusions worthy of psychopathic treatment.

This becomes more evident when we consider the "new machines, new needs, and new industries" of the past decade—auto, radio, aviation, and television. Let's throw in frigidaire, for good measure. All of these new devices caused an "unparalleled prosperity" from 1922 to 1929—just seven short years. They had no permanent, sustaining power. Nor were they unmixed blessings. They were accompanied by an army of technologically unemployed, estimated, before the crash of 1929, at from 1,500,000 to 5,000,000 in number. Virgil Jordan, a well known statistician, said of the "good times" of this period, in 1928:

"Prosperity . . . is an illusion created by extraordinary financial conditions, by exceptional activity in production of certain types of goods, by radical changes in the organization and methods of manufacture, by shifts in the methods of distribution, and by shifts in the living habits of the urban population. These changes have been carried forward on a powerful tide of inflation, so that their significance and the problems they raise for the future have been submerged and obscured from public attention."

Now, the question arises, how come? Why, with the immense increase in the automobile industry, together with the reinforcements caused by the radio, airplane, television, and frigidaire, were there so many unemployed, was prosperity so illusory?

The answer is simple: new machines, new needs, new industries do not simply mean additions to old machines, old needs and old industries. They often mean the absolute destruction, or serious impairment of old industries. Take the auto. It destroyed the vehicle, harness, horse-shoeing, and

horse and mule breeding industries, while seriously depriving the farmer of a market for feed, and at the same time working considerable havoc on the railroads, the end of which is not yet. The radio, in turn, has hurt newspaper advertising, printing, lithographing, phonograph making, amusement, and other industries. Aviation also affects the railroads, with the worst still to come. Also observe what new machines adapted to old industries do. As in the coal industry, they cause over-mechanization and over-manning. And so it goes: these wonders of technology make for far-reaching displacement for which they do not provide equal replacement. In fact, with the tendency toward automatic machinery, with the workerless industry the objective, the new machines and new industries of the future will have new aspects not now discernible on the physiognomies of the old. There will certainly be a new basis for statistical accumulation and interpretations.

Why does techno-crazy capitalism persist in this self-destructive course, for that's what it's likely to be, with its unemployment, crises, and dangers of revolt and confiscation? Because, say some, its profits necessitate new investment outlets in new machines, etc. Others like Veblen and Howard Scott say it is because capitalists are stupid, incompetent, and ignorant of the physical laws discovered by modern technology and given uncontrolled sway by profit-making capitalism.

Ludwig Lore, writing in the *New Republic*, gives a better and more satisfactory reason, as follows:

"Decreased wages and salaries bring about reduced purchasing power. But they are not the initial causes that break down the business cycle at the beginning of a crisis. It is erroneous to speak of sinking buying power when a crisis begins. What changes is the sum total of productivity, which is rising so rapidly that the buying power of the consumer cannot follow. It was Karl Marx who first called attention to this inherent contradiction in the capitalist system. The producer, to survive in the competitive struggle, increases his output and improves the capacity of his machinery. By modernizing labor processes he raises the output and lowers the number of men em-

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# An Appeal For Unity

*The following urgent message jointly sent to the Labor and Socialist International, Zurich, and the Communist International, Moscow, by seven independent revolutionary parties in Europe has been endorsed by the N.E.C. of the CPLA.*

**N**EVER since the end of the war has the situation been more serious for the workers throughout the world than now. In all capitalist countries unemployment continually increases and reaction, seated firmly in power, diminishes the social services and forces the living standards of employed and unemployed alike down to the hunger level. Fascism, as the last bulwark of capitalism in decay extends its power, is illustrated most recently by the advent to power of Hitler in Germany. Attempts at protest by the workers are met by police terrorism and in many countries by attacks on their social and political rights.

The danger of war grows greater. The "disarmament" farce at Geneva merely emphasizes the truth that a new race in armaments by the great powers has begun. The intention of the reactionary dictatorship to re-arm Germany, with its powerful repercussions on militarist opinion in France; the persistent covert opposition to all proposals for limitation of armaments by the representatives of the so-called "National" Government in Britain, while it maintains and develops its imperialist tyranny in crushing the struggle for freedom of the people of India; the open militarism of the Fascist governments in Italy and elsewhere; the cloud of suspicions and fears which darken the mutual relations of all governments in Europe and the military adventures in South America which the North American and British imperialism is encouraging, are sufficient indications of the real dangers in the situation.

The imperialist adventures of Japan in Manchuria, following the historic examples set for her by the European Powers, has finally exposed the sham "League of Nations." In its constant provocations to the workers' government in Russia, Japanese imperialism is the open instrument of the hidden capitalist designs against the U.S.S.R. All the conditions which led to the world war of 1914-1918 exist again today. If the capitalist class is al-

lowed to remain in control of the governments in most countries of the world, a new world war on an even greater scale is inevitable.

These are the dangers threatening the workers of every capitalist country. They cannot be met and overcome by the toleration of capitalist policies, based on conceptions of class collaboration, which have disastrously affected working-class conditions and fatally discredited the Labor and Socialist International. Nor can they be opposed successfully by the communist conception of the "united front" as a tactic to be used for party advantage.

To break and defeat reaction and fascism calls for a new and sincere *unity in action* by workers' organizations which will lead eventually to an effective unity of organization of all workers. Not a superficial unity for sectarian purposes which merely cloaks a fundamental disunity of idea and purpose, but a *real* unity, based on a common realization of the meaning of the class-struggle, the experiences of the revolutionary struggle in Russia and other countries and a resolve to wage relentless war on capitalism. This true unity involves an open repudiation of all policies of capitalist toleration and class collaboration and steadfast opposition to all parties professing them.

Without effective agreement on these fundamentals, "unity" and "party integrity" are empty words and a sham and a hindrance to working-class progress. But once there is a common acceptance of the fundamentals unity is essential.

We are all—social democrats, communists, independent revolutionary socialists—stricken alike by the blows of reaction. Capitalists make no distinction between us in their onslaught upon us when they reduce wages or deprive us of our social and political rights. In the eyes of the reaction *all* are workers, irrespective of political conceptions.

As workers we have common interests. Whatever our differences, we know that our first most important task must be to break and defeat the attacks made upon us. So long as the reaction maintains its power not a single demand of ours, not even one of our aims can be realized. The essential first duty is to beat the reaction.

We cannot do that, any one of us, with our own forces acting singly and

in isolation. Our divisions enfeeble us; our forces are spent in mutual struggle instead of being directed at the common enemy. We are driven farther apart although as class-conscious workers our interests are the same.

Comrades!

A united proletarian front of all workers is an imperative necessity. That is the primary condition of a successful fight against the reaction and of an advance to achieve Socialism.

The Independent Socialist Parties, therefore, make a pressing appeal to all workers and workers' organizations to take decisive steps to achieve a true proletarian unity. We are unanimous in our fight against reaction and fascism; in resisting the attacks on living standards and on our political rights. Let us realize the united proletarian front of class-conscious workers on these simple demands. Agitate in favor of this unity in action of all who accept our fundamentals, in your union, in your party section, among your fellow workers everywhere. Make a proposal for the united proletarian front on this basis of repudiation of class-collaboration; of solidarity in the class struggle; of revolutionary unity for the achievement of Socialism.

Common action by all workers' organizations is the most important aim both now and in the immediate future. Out of this united front for common action there may be developed later—and this is the goal of all the workers of the world—a united international. This unity is impossible unless the basis of class-struggle and revolutionary Socialism is accepted. It cannot be achieved either, unless the parties affiliated to the Third International cease to be groups under the dictatorship of a central organization which isolates them from the struggle of the working-class in their own countries. The crisis, and the advance of the reaction, have shown that the policy of collaboration with bourgeois parties is as futile as the policy which isolates a section of the workers from the struggle of the whole of the class and sets the different parts of the working-class against each other instead of uniting them.

Comrades!

The fight for this program will bring the unity in action from which the unity in organization will spring. Divisions in the workers' movement will disappear and a new, vigorous and



# What Is Sectarianism?

*The following statement was drawn up by a Committee on Inter-Party Relationships appointed by the N. E. C. at the request of the N. Y. Branch. The statement has been approved by the N. E. C.*

**T**HE charge has been made by some people that CPLA is "sectarian."

An organization is well-advised to consider its position from time to time and to weigh carefully criticisms directed against it.

We need to ask, therefore, what attitudes and activities may properly be described as "sectarian." For an organization to have a clearly defined position and theory cannot be regarded as sectarian. If the recent rise of Hitlerism in Germany emphasizes the need of labor unity, it surely emphasizes equally the need of a clear revolutionary line free from perilous reformist tendencies.

Again, the mere fact that an organization is small does not constitute it a sect. On that basis every important organization was at some time a sect. In a vanguard organization mere numbers do not count as in mass organizations, such as unions or unemployed leagues.

Neither can the CPLA be regarded as sectarian because it excludes ex-

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strong workers' movement will arise.

Forward comrades; for unity in action.

Against Fascism and War!

Against Class-Collaboration!

Against Toleration of Capitalist Governments!

Against Capitalism Itself!

Fight as workers of all parties—

For Solidarity of the Class Struggle!

For Working-Class Power!

For the Defence of Soviet Russia!

For the Socialization of Land, Industry, Transport and Banking!

For Final Victory in the Social Revolution!

Signed on behalf of:—

Independent Labor Party (Great Britain).

Independent Socialist Party (Holland).

Independent Socialist Labor Party (Poland).

Socialist Workers' Party (Germany).

Norwegian Labor Party.

Party of Proletarian Unity (France).

Italian Socialist Party.

plotters of labor from its membership, and is not satisfied to be a loose organization of miscellaneous individuals, but aims to bring together genuine fighters in the class-struggle who wherever they may be want to work in a disciplined manner in accordance with CPLA attitudes and policies. No organization such as ours can grow strong unless its members believe in it heartily and are enthusiastically devoted to its welfare.

The mere fact that other organizations as well as the CPLA claim to be left-wing vanguard parties or groups does not make the CPLA at once a sect. The statement of our September convention that the various political and theoretical groups have failed to "fire the imagination of the unorganized masses for the battle to build a powerful front against capitalist forces" is still true, and with it the need for the CPLA.

We shall measure up to our responsibility and opportunity in this perilous hour when Fascism and Fascist tendencies are everywhere save in Soviet Russia moving ruthlessly forward, only if we gain an ever deeper and surer conviction of the importance of the CPLA. Wherever we have carried our message to workers in the field they have responded. We know from experience that our program and tactics meet their need. On every hand there is a crying need for more CPLA workers. Let us confidently brush aside carping criticism and redouble our efforts to supply that need!

We may observe also that from the field, from the workers with whom we have been in touch, we do not hear the criticism that CPLA is divisive or sectarian. They object, rather, that CPLA is constantly rendering great services to the workers and various organizations and not sufficiently taking advantage of the resultant goodwill in order to build up the CPLA itself.

The only concrete basis given for the charge of sectarianism is that our official organ, *Labor Age*, has often criticized the S. P. (rather certain social-democratic tendencies in the S. P.) and failed to give credit for good work on its part. It seems important to point out in the first place that criticism is not only permissible but on occasion essential. If wrong and dangerous tendencies in the labor movement are not exposed the result is bound to be disastrous. As the N. E. C. report to the

1932 convention stated: "Only in a movement where criticism is free and vigorous can there be continued vitality and progress. The tradition which the bureaucrats and reactionaries in American unions have built up in the post-war period to the effect that any opposition and criticism is treason, is one of the important reasons why the trade union movement is today so weak and fatuous."

Criticism of social-democratic and reformist tendencies is emphatically voiced in the N. E. C. report to the September convention. *Labor Age* cannot be censured for doing the same. On the contrary, we believe that recent events in Germany have once again illustrated the peril to the working-class of such reformist tendencies and that it is a part of our duty to prevent them from gaining a hold upon American workers. On this we cannot compromise. If we do, we have no good reason for existence as a separate organization.

There are tendencies which are "sectarian" and against which we must vigilantly stand on guard. It is sectarian to permit criticism to absorb time and energy which ought to be given to activity.

It is sectarian also constantly to carp at one's own organization and its activities so as to spread an air of defeatism. This is the very opposite of the critical analysis of the good and bad points in our activity which results in greater effectiveness and enthusiasm.

It is sectarian for an organization to become rigid and fixed and obsessed with the idea that it can make no mistakes, and we point out that though CPLA advances itself as the sound left-wing vanguard organization for American labor, it has always asserted its readiness to confer with other organizations on how a more united and powerful revolutionary vanguard may be built in this stronghold of capitalism and imperialism.

It is sectarian to develop an attitude of suspicion and exclusiveness so that workers, especially young workers, are discouraged from coming into our activities and thus getting the chance to be developed into sound militants.

It is sectarian to be unwilling or unable to work with individuals and organizations which differ from us.

Above all, sectarianism manifests itself in an organization holding itself aloof and withdrawing from mass ac-

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# News From Workers . . .

## American Roy Defense Committee

"The essence of the charge against me is that I have tried to organize a violent revolution for the overthrow of the British Government in India. The issue involved in trials like this is the right of the oppressed people to revolt against and overthrow the imperialist state. The British King is but the emblem of imperialism which oppresses and exploits the Indian people. The theory of conspiracy is but a legal pretext. This trial is an expression of the conflict between the popular will and the established law. The conflict must end in a violent clash, unless the established law is changed according to the will of the people. But laws of maintenance of a given state are in their turn defended by the coercive machinery, namely, the police, the courts, and finally the army. The process of political evolution is inevitably subject to periodical violent outbreak, because of the resistance of the established order. . . ."

The quotation given above is taken from a statement prepared by Manabendra Nath Roy, internationally famous fighter for the liberation of colonial peoples from the yoke of imperialist domination. The statement was to have been delivered in Sessions Court, Cawnpore U. P. where Roy was on trial, charged with "waging war against the King," but the judge never allowed him to make it, declaring "I will not allow the accused (Roy) to make sedition propaganda."

The arrest and conviction of Comrade Roy, whose name has been for 20 years closely associated with the revolutionary movement throughout the world, has aroused worldwide attention and protest here.

A far-flung net of Roy defense committees was organized throughout India by the trade union and nationalist organizations. At the time of his trial thousands of workers demonstrated at the police stations so that the British authorities found it necessary to transfer him to Cawnpore.

But this popular protest movement was not confined solely to India. Roy defense committees were organized in Germany and other European countries. In Hamburg 20,000 workers demonstrated at the British Consulate and demanded Roy's unconditional release. Prominent individuals like Einstein, Barbusse, Roland, Toller, etc., have issued vigorous protests to the MacDonald government and sent cables to the Round Table Con-

ference in London demanding his release.

Roy was arrested in Bombay on June 21, 1931 and after a farcical "trial" was sentenced to 12 years' penal servitude. The treatment of Roy before and after his trial was outrageously brutal. He was not allowed to see any one, not even his lawyers. Representatives of his defense committee, including Paudet Jawahrlal Nehru, were barred.

At one stage of the proceedings the court was transferred to jail in order to avoid the demonstrations of protest on the part of the city population. No defense witnesses were allowed nor was the defense allowed to argue the case. Ordinary reading matter, even newspapers, have been barred to him.

In the early days of his activities he was one of the active leaders of the terrorist movements in Bengal. After a long series of arrests, Roy managed to leave India and eventually arrived in America. Here he devoted much of his time to the study of the works of Marx and Engels, and was soon recognized as one of the leading Marxists of those days. In America too, Roy was arrested because of his political activities but he escaped to Mexico when he was released on bail. While there, he organized a Communist Party and was for a time, its secretary. After the war, Roy came to Moscow where he met Lenin and soon became one of his closest collaborators.

During all these years, and especially since 1920, Roy carried on an intensive propaganda for India's right to self-determination and for the overthrow of imperialist domination.

In a long series of books and pamphlets, including "One Year of Non-Cooperation," "India in Transition," "India's Problems and Solutions," "Future of Indian Politics," Roy lays down the basic principles and program of the national democratic revolution in India.

Towards the close of 1926, Roy went to China as the representative of the Communist Internationale. His rich experience before and during the years 1926 and 1927 are now published in a book, "Revolution and Counter Revolution."

At the time of his arrest Roy's activities were directed toward the unification of the trade union movement in India.

Here in the United States, the first steps to organize a movement on behalf of Roy have already been taken. On December 10 a picket demonstration took place in front of the British Con-

sulate in New York. At the same time a delegation, consisting of Roger Baldwin of the Committee on International Prisoners, J. B. Matthews of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Harry W. Laidler of the League for Industrial Democracy and I. Zimmerman of the Communist Party U. S. A. (Opposition) appeared before Gerald Campbell, British Consulate-General in New York and demanded the release of Roy and other political prisoners in India. At the present time efforts are being made to organize an American Roy Defense Committee. This work is sponsored by a committee consisting of A. J. Muste, Roger Baldwin, J. B. Matthews, Harry W. Laidler and I. Zimmerman.

This Committee, when organized will do its utmost not only to enlighten the American people as to the true state of affairs in India, but to organize the protest movement in the country to exercise pressure upon the British authorities to obtain the release of the imprisoned Nationalists in India, including Roy, the Meerut prisoners, etc., and to mitigate their indescribable conditions in prison until they are released.

I. ZIMMERMAN.

## Cooperative Distributors

A new and original attempt to make consumers' co-operation more effective in this country was recently made at a meeting held in New York, where representatives of workers, farmers, church, social service and co-operative organizations founded Co-operative Distributors, Inc., to serve as a genuine Rochdale co-operative purchasing agency for the non-profit organizations and as a mail-order distributor of goods tested in advance for the ultimate consumer on a nation wide basis.

A growing knowledge of the many ways by which the consumer is fleeced, pointed out by Consumers' Research and many other engineers and economists, as well as the recent successes of the farmers' co-operative oil and gas stations and even of refining plants in the midwest, indicates that even in an industry supposed to be monopolized as is oil, intelligence and courage on the part of the consumer can lead to relatively effective protection for him, and that capitalist distribution is not impregnable.

By testing goods for quality in advance and placing the analysis right on the label, including labor and material costs, as well as by eliminating the many wastes in profit motivated distribution it is hoped to keep prices down and within

# New Books . . .

## *The Fox Spills the Beans*

"Upton Sinclair Presents William Fox," by Upton Sinclair. Published by the author, Los Angeles, (West Branch), California. \$3.

THE poor boy will rise from his working class surroundings and make something of himself. He sells papers, peddles candy and soon learns the stunt of financing other boys in the neighborhood, and he puts them to earning pennies for him. He starts a bank account, but his friends must not know, since they might come to borrow. He gets married and his friends make up a hundred dollars to buy him some nice furniture. He banks the money and goes to a second-hand store. He works day and night and his pennies become dollars, and lo, a change—the busy young man from an East Side Ghetto finds it increasingly difficult to jibe with the proletarian outlook of his family, and his own youthful soapboxing for socialism grows less ardent and takes on a hollow tone.

About this time the flickering, jumping moving picture "fillums" are born. The hero gets in on the ground floor of the novel industry, and in a few short years—God being with him—his name and his power and his culture and his social outlook are wrapped in billions of feet of movie films around the world, and it is William Fox, the great theatre-chain owner and cinema producer of all time, for your approval.

A real success story, made in America. Upton Sinclair's pen has trouble restraining itself. The mad folly of a business-system which glorifies fatuity and per-

the reach of those who are still fortunate enough to have a job. The increase in volume of sale of any article will give the co-operative the power to demand fair labor conditions. In this manner it is hoped to help the workers and farmers as consumers at one end, and as producers at the other.

E. J. Lever, of the Machinists, was elected President and Clinton S. Golden, dirt farmer, of Solebury, Pa., was elected Vice President. Many requests for information and memberships in the co-operative, expressing a deep interest in this new approach to consumers' co-operation have followed the announcement of its organization. Further information may be had by writing Co-operative Distributors, Inc., 128 E. 16th Street, New York City.

E. J. LEVER.

petuates twisted views of life on a world scale, through what is perhaps the worlds' most powerful cultural medium, and all for the purpose of making one dollar become two dollars, two four and so on into the millions. But the core of the story has to do with how the big banking houses and monopoly corporations and renowned financiers at the top of America have become the dragons who lay in wait for the Mr. Foxes who, poor boys, don't know any better than to model their lives on the school-book tradition of working hard and being shrwed and coming up in the world with a few million dollars.

Used to be the formula worked, of course, just that way. You became a "success," you got a million dollars and thereby you became an exploiter on a grand scale. And the bankers thought you were a swell fellow. But nowadays it doesn't work; although the good tradition, the rise of the poor boy, still flourishes, and lots of people swallow it. It appears, now, that the really big giants have made a science of gobbling up the upstarts, the little fellows who come along with just a few hundred million—they make a real killing and wait for the next crop of inspired small exploiters who burn themselves out becoming big exploiters, and then, when these "successes" are good and fat, the investment bankers get them. And gobble them up.

So it was with Mr. Fox; he suddenly found himself surrounded by the best business minds in America, and like wolves they tore his bonanza organization to pieces, wrecked it, emptied it to a shell. Mr. Fox tells the story to Upton Sinclair, for he wants to vindicate his good name; Fox stockholders who were also stripped in the process must not blame Mr. Fox; and Upton Sinclair writes the story, hoping it will become a "hit," because the money it brings will be used to place a set of Sinclair's works in every library in the world.

If you want to know how rottenly avaricious and wealthy and empty of social responsibility and vision the "leaders" and rulers of the United States are, read the book. The Fox spills the beans.

TESS HUFF.

## *Horses and Men*

"Machine Age in the Hills," by Malcolm Ross. Macmillan. \$2.00.

WHAT happens when a horse and car meet for the first time?

Picture a horse walking down a country road in the old days. He plods along passing mudholes and bridges and houses without concern. Then from somewhere ahead comes a most horrible noise—a terrible rending of the air. The horse stops and trembles. And before he can count ten the thing is upon him. It is spread out over the road and there are no horses or men making it go but it runs forward swiftly.

The horse shies away.

And this is what has been happening lately to some men who have come face to face with the Machine Age.

Indeed this horse-like approach to the problem is so common now that practically every book and article and speech is simply a shying-away. Men are seeing the Machine today, they look at it because it is idle when it should run, and there is suffering among the people. They see all this and know that something is wrong, and they set out to discover what the trouble is and what must be done about it. They get so close—just this side of radicalism—and thurn horsey.

The truth is that the love for truth and justice which in recent years has brought some of America's leading writers and thinkers into the radical movement for socializing the Machine is a quality that the majority of those who clamor for attention don't have.

But after all this is supposed to be a book review.

Well, Mr. Ross has done a colorful job of reporting. He puts the color on thick when he tells about the Holy-Rollers and tobacco juice spitting and gun shooting, but he does show up the soft coal industry for what it is, a mess, a trap in the hills in which hundreds of thousands are permanently caught.

For one thing, Mr. Ross would like to see the hill-billie miners learn to settle their troubles peaceably. I don't understand. And he thinks the Quakers taught us something. For a few weeks they fed the mine children oatmeal and inveigled a few miners into making hickory chairs. However, the situation is so shameful and desperate and dangerous that maybe the government should step in—just a passing hint, you understand—and then Mr. Ross shies away.

T. H.

### ORDER YOUR BOOKS

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128 East 16th Street, New York

### **Ethics of Private Profit**

"100,000,000 Guinea Pigs," by Arthur Kallet and F. J. Schlink. Vanguard Press, New York. \$2.00.

ANY one with a tough conscience and a bright idea can start manufacturing any kind of product his imagination conjures which "may contain strychnine, arsenic, carbolic acid, and any other deadly poisons. But—in most States—he will have violated no law, indeed will not have offended the ethical sense of the average judge or legislator," is the opinion of the authors of "100,000,000 Guinea Pigs." So each year, from babies to granddads, thousands fall seriously ill or die in order that business may not be disturbed.

Workers who face every day the danger of accident and death because of inadequate industrial safeguards have learned to accept stoically the hazards of a system that sacrifices everything to profits. Otherwise there would have been effective revolt before this. But even those who are "wise" to the class struggle will marvel at the callousness of the ruling class, or rather its blindness, in reading "100,000,000 Guinea Pigs." So completely has capitalism in its search for profits lost its sense of proportion that it is impotent to prevent the wholesale poisoning of the populace, even though members of the ruling class itself may be some of the victims. The authors, through their testimony presented in the book, emphasize how fundamentally anti-social the profit system actually is.

Many years ago, after Upton Sinclair slammed "The Jungle" at a startled world, we (meaning the public) in a crusading frenzy, passed laws presumably to safeguard the health of the consumer against the rapaciousness of individual profit seekers. Messrs. Kallet and Schlink published their findings in 1932, about 25 years later. Yet here is enough evidence of the "slaughter of the innocent" to fill 320 pages. Laws, therefore, though one of the recommendations of the authors, are of little value. Nothing short of a change in the social structure will be of final worth. While here in the U. S. A., a man who sells a deadly poison as an absolutely safe utility is permitted to get away with a \$25 fine, if caught and convicted after a long drawn out trial, in the U.S.S.R. such gentry would be at the business end of a firing squad within 24 hours. That's the difference between a government founded on the rights of property and one on social well-being.

However, must we imbibe poisons that put us on our backs and kill us off with-

out having a remedy any closer than a change in the profit system? Fundamentally yes; but in a lesser measure the consumer can protect himself through some form of organization. The consumers' cooperatives are of some help in weeding out dangerous commodities. Consumers' Research, Inc., is of inestimable value in serving as a clearing house for information as to the quality of merchandise sold in the open market and the devious methods used in selling. And now there is Cooperative Distributors,

Inc., which makes possible the actual distribution of scientifically tested products to the homes of the more wide-awake consumer.

There can be only one objection to the book. Its title is insulting to the guinea pig. That little animal is a helpless victim who gives up his soul presumably in the interests of science. We, on the other hand, permit ourselves to be drugged, maimed and killed in order to uphold the sacred rights of private profit  
I. MUFSON.

## **The Need for a United Labor Party**

(Continued from Page 9)

from all the capitalist elements, have also to face determined opposition from many workers, can accomplish a great social change in a country like the United States, is the most dangerous kind of day-dreaming. As left-wingers, in the past at any rate, have often pointed out, if the militant elements among the workers go off in a corner by themselves, the result is to leave the masses in the hands of reactionaries. When the militants organize by themselves, the other organizations will move further to the right than they otherwise would, because they feel they have to fight the lefts and be as different from them as possible. If a really revolutionary crisis arises and the militant elements are in touch with the mass of labor and have the confidence of the workers, because they have led them intelligently in their daily struggles, we have some hope.

Militants who argue, as some of them do, that you cannot build industrial unions in this country, cannot get the workers into a labor party, but that those workers who are not advanced enough to fight for organizations to deal with the problems right under their noses in the shop, and to quit voting the Republican or the Democratic ticket, will follow a handful of revolutionists to the barricades if a crisis arises, are either hopeless, or idiotic or are provocateurs deliberately working on behalf of capitalists to keep the labor movement as weak as possible and to insure the triumph of Fascism.

### **Our Place Is in Organizations of the Masses**

On the other hand, we are convinced that without a powerful, intelligent,

revolutionary left-wing which carefully studies the lessons taught by the course of labor parties in other countries we too shall end, in spite of all the votes we roll up in elections, as slaves to Fascism. A labor party may be but a passing phase in our development. So long as it is in the picture, radicals should be in it, not isolated from it.

We say to workers of all shades of opinion—red, pink, yellow, green or what not—workers who have been kicked out on the street, who are working at starvation wages if they have jobs at all; who were good Americans and bought little homes only to have them taken away; who have no security left, who are suffering in the very midst of abundance because they have turned out goods so efficiently; industrial workers, agricultural, clerical, technical, professional—we say, the time has come to build a united fighting party for all who toil, in which no exploiters of labor will have any part, which will set about to organize industry, in such a way as to make America a land of abundance and joy.

Already workers in a number of places and in different industries have taken steps toward the building of such a party. What are the chances in your city? Have you brought the subject up in your union, workers' education class, cooperative society or political group? Write to us if you are interested in the subject and want to be put in touch with others who are also interested.

There is no hope in the old parties of the elephant and the jackass. Divided on the political field we are helpless. United, the American masses have the intelligence, the vision, the power to build a world according to their heart's desire.



## We Can Organize the Jobless

(Continued from Page 11)

workers' central agencies. Workers' homes are their "hotels." These organizers must be crusaders in the real sense of the word, for upon their example and understanding depend the "dynamics" of the movement. There has been a call for years for organizers who can really move the workers, work with them, and speak in the "American language" the message that should be given. Today that need is more urgent than ever before, as the current crisis become prolonged.

6. *Sponsoring committees from the middle class, professional union organizers as active participants in the movement, executive board set-ups that deprive the rank and file jobless of decision, are to be severely avoided.* In some unemployed organizations, the same evils that bedevil the trade union movement are springing up. These evils are all based on lack of faith in the mass of the workers. One of these very serious mistakes is to start out an unemployed league, with a sponsoring committee, generally made up of middle class people. Such committees are a dead hand, as a rule, on the militant activities of the leagues. They want only "nice," namby-pamby enterprises to be embarked upon. To make the comments short, they have no place in unemployed organizations. The jobless are to do their own organizing and to run their own organizations. That is a cardinal rule. Organizers or officials of A. F. of L. unions, with some few exceptions, are as big a drag on the jobless bodies as the local ward politicians are. They bring in a trimming policy publicly, and also an autocratic policy internally. They have no use for the "stiffs" and introduce the same czaristic policies as

have distinguished most A. F. of L. unions. The unemployed leagues are not dual organizations. They are not rivals of the unions. That must be made clear. But they certainly must not be allowed to repeat the errors which have destroyed the spirit of so many unions.

The questions, "How to start" and "How to organize pressure groups," remain to be answered in detail. For a beginning, the best course is to have a meeting of a few workers who understand each other in the home of one of them. There the matter can be gone over carefully and thoroughly. From that conference, another meeting can be called, for a mass meeting in a school house immediately or for another smaller meeting in a house, if that should prove necessary. With the public meeting, the organization should begin to function at once. Regular committees—to see the local authorities, to carry on the organization message, to take care of local grievances—should start their work. The creation of local orchestras for entertainment programs, both for their particular league and for organization work in other sections, should be encouraged. Arrangements for speakers to visit the league to continue to drive home the ideas back of the organization, should be made. If these things are done, there will be plenty of activity for league members without organized self-help being launched.

With these measures decided upon by the league, pressure groups will not be hard to find. A leader or two with intelligence and courage—in opposing evictions, in steering strikes on public works or in some other similar action—will gather the necessary corps of cooperators.

A live state league can help considerably in encouraging the pressure of the local bodies, and in counseling as to the best methods to use. The one important thing is to win results as soon as possible, and to plan out the work so that such early results will be obtained. Nothing gives more verve to the organization's life than achievements in its early endeavors.

A huge reservoir of unemployed are on hand today. They can be brought together in easier fashion than were the working people in industrial plants. Our task is to hasten the organization work, so that they may secure a knowledge of where their interests lie. It is a race between radical labor forces, speaking a "language" the workless can appreciate, and reactionary forces which will seek to use the unemployed and lead them into pitfalls.

## Techno-Crazy That's Capitalism!

(Continued from Page 23)

ployed without, however, increasing wages in proportion to labor's increased productivity, the only method that could keep the purchasing power of the masses in step with rising commodity production. Here lies the fundamental cause of every crisis."

Here we have the reason for techno-crazy capitalism's competitive necessity. The present-day remedy is increased wages and reduced hours proportionate to the increased productivity of the machine.

But that's impossible under capitalism, with its competition and strife. A new machine-owning, co-operative society alone will free us from techno-crazy capitalism.

## What Is Sectarianism?

(Continued from Page 25)

tivities, talking to the masses in doctrinaire and unfamiliar terms, or seeking to impose its dogmas and theories on mass organizations. As we have already intimated, this evil the CPLA has avoided. In the work of organizing to work with and penetrate mass organizations we have proved that we can do so with a real measure of success. We raise the question whether the charge of sectarianism and sowing dissension in the labor movement may not properly be leveled against those who in such a crisis as the present attack the CPLA and themselves refuse to make any contribution to these manifold activities. After all the real cleavage in the present crisis is between those who take part in the actual struggles of the workers and those who merely speculate and talk, in a word: between the fighters and the chair warmers.

In conclusion, the CPLA must continue to keep its own position clear and to build a devoted membership, but at the same time extend and improve its activities in mass organizations. We must at all times stand honestly for the united front in economic organizations and struggles! We must intensify effort for united mass action on the political field! And we will answer the threatening advance of reaction and Fascism which would degrade and enslave the masses with redoubled effort to build a solid united front of workers and farmers determined to abolish capitalism and establish the workers' republic!

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# Labor Action, Our Answer

Bill Truax and Arnold Johnson cruised through Ohio in a \$12 Dodge. A man carrying on his back a sack of Red Cross flour stopped to listen to their plans. Many such men listened. They knocked on doors in the workingclass sections of towns and villages and utter strangers accepted them like long expected friends. Through 76 counties they cruised. In mining towns, industrial towns, and country regions of farms. Everywhere the people listened and answered "Yes!"

\* \* \*

League after league of unemployed workers and dirt farmers in the 76 counties got going, the scattered leagues through Ohio knit together, and to the state "legislature" of the unemployed in Columbus came 328 delegates representing 82 thousand organized jobless workers.

Get the word "legislature."

The workers will impeach the governors, the judges, the bankers' pawns in office, for they do not represent the masses. The workers will set up a parallel government of their own.

\* \* \*

From the Ohio "legislature" went a

call to the 16 million unemployed of the United States for a tremendous national convention in Columbus on the weekend of July 4. Into this movement the CPLA, LABOR AGE, LABOR ACTION, have thrown their energies.

LABOR ACTION, the new CPLA weekly, will tell the story of this history-making forward step of jobless workers and dirt farmers from every front, every state. LABOR ACTION will rally the forgotten masses to expose the puppet government, national and state, to impeach governors, and to integrate their strength in the country-wide struggle for relief. LABOR ACTION will be the paper of the unemployed.

\* \* \*

To you we must say—Get into this movement. Get behind it. Spread this message. LABOR ACTION must be broadcast far and wide between now and July 4. Money is needed, subscriptions are needed. Contribute! subscribe! get subscriptions! The national convention of the unemployed will reflect your reaction to this appeal, whether good, lukewarm or indifferent. So with the others who read it. Only action can be an answer now.

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